CHARACTERIZATION AND STRUCTURE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF TUDOR COMEDY

by Julia Matthews, B.F.A., M.Phil.

Submitted for the degree of Ph.D.

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Department of English and Comparative Literature

Faculty of Arts

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SUMMARY

Characterization and Structure in the Development of Tudor Comedy

The role of characterization in dramatic structure is assessed by theoretical criteria. Characters who perform actions necessary for the completion of the narrative sequence are said to be "bound" to the narrative; those without such obligations are "free". Characters who maintain a single, constant meaning during the course of a play are said to be "static"; characters who change or develop into new roles are "dynamic". Horatian decorum demanded that comic characters be static, and the characters of Plautine and Terentian tradition were almost always bound to narrative intrigue. However, evaluations of six Tudor comedies show an increasing use of non-classical characterization within the comic form.

In the early comedies *Johan Johan* and *Roister Doister* all characters are bound and static, yet the impetus to enlarge the role of characterization is evident. The characters of *Johan Johan* are expanded from their French source, and *Roister Doister* includes extraneous episodes in which Udall displays his braggart hero. Free characters abound in *Misogonus*; as well the play brings dynamic characterization into the scope of comedy with the conversion of its prodigal son.

Free characters offer new possibilities of non-narrative plotting. In comedies of the 1580s favourite traditional characters appear as diversions outside the action, and thematic arrangements of characters inform the increasingly complex plots. Lyly stresses the symbolic potential of characters in *Endimion*, whereas Greene uses dynamic characterization to heighten the illusion of independent figures in *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*. *Love's Labour's Lost* exposes the limitations of comic artifice by pulling the characters between convention and individualization.

By the end of the sixteenth century free and dynamic characters had become common, and characterization had established a sizable claim on the design of English comedy. These developments set the English form apart from its neoclassical counterparts.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many thanks to the British Library for permission to reproduce the titlepage of their 1630 edition of *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* from microfilm (STC I:12268).

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

One of the hallmarks of the comedy of the English Renaissance is its exciting depiction of character. When we think of the comic golden age of Shakespeare, Jonson, Dekker and Middleton we are bound to think of the memorable characters of Volpone, Rosalind, Sir Toby Belch, Simon Eyre, Fastidious Brisk and their fellows. The great comedies of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries made the representation of personality and the perspective of the individual character a prime concern. These characterizations often go beyond the narrative requirements of the comic plot. For instance, in *The Merchant of Venice* Shylock's daughter runs off with his treasure in order to marry a Christian. This subplot action has no direct effect on the main story of Shylock's bloodthirsty bond, yet Shakespeare unites the two actions with his characterization of his comic villain. In III.1 we hear his outrageous response to his daughter's treachery:

> Why there, there, there, there! A diamond gone cost me two thousand ducats in Frankfurt! The curse never fell upon our nation till now, I never felt it till now. Two thousand ducats in that, and other precious, precious jewels! I would my daughter were dead at my foot, and the jewels in her ear: would she were hearsed at my foot, and the ducats in her coffin. No news of them, why so? And I know not what's spent in the search. Why thou loss upon loss -- the thief gone with so much, and so much to find the thief, and no satisfaction, no revenge, nor no ill luck stirring but what lights o'my shoulders, no sighs but o'my breathing, no tears but o'my shedding.[1]

As we listen to Shylock's passions of greed, pride, and grievance we become increasingly interested in the motivations and responses of this extraordinary individual. Even when, as in this scene, the character is not taking action, his presence and his speeches have a significant place in the organization of the plot.

This structural emphasis on the individuality of characters was a feature of late Elizabethan and Jacobean comedy, but it had not always been so. The classical and neoclassical models of comedy relied on the narrative tangles of intrigue for their plot structure; characterization was a subsidiary element and was dictated by convention and

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1. *The Merchant of Venice* (III.1.66-76), edited by M. M. Mahood, The New Cambridge Shakespeare (Cambridge, 1987).

decorum. In the eyes of most classical and Renaissance theorists comic characterization was a matter of maintaining the traditional depiction of private citizens.

Character was, however, a determining element in many Renaissance definitions of comedy. As with so much of the literary and aesthetic theory of the period, these definitions derive from the classical tradition. One of the key texts was Aristotle's *Poetics*; in it is the much-quoted passage,

> ... this is also the differentia that marks off tragedy from comedy, since the latter aims to represent people as worse, the former as better, than the men of the present day.[2]

The works of the fourth century Latin grammarians were likewise seminal texts and had been more widely read than Aristotle in the tradition of medieval scholarship. They defined the dramatic genres largely by their *personae*; Evanthius makes character the first of "many distinguishing marks" between tragedy and comedy:

> ... in Comedy the characters are men of middle fortune, the dangers they run are neither serious nor pressing, their actions lead to happy conclusions; but in Tragedy things are just the opposite.[3]

Diomedes makes the same point in *Ars Grammatica*:

> Comedy differs from Tragedy in that in Tragedy heroes, generals and kings are introduced, in Comedy humble and private people.[4]

Likewise the famous Terentian commentator, Donatus, writes,

> Comedy is a tale containing various elements of the dispositions of town-dwelling and private people.[5]

This view that comedy required certain types of character was echoed almost verbatim in Renaissance commentary. Robortello, in his 1548 essay "On Comedy", repeats Aristotle's distinctions:

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2. Aristotle, *Poetics*, translated by M. E. Hubbard, in *Ancient Literary Criticism: The Principal Texts in New Translations*, edited by D. A. Russell and M. Winterbottom (Oxford, 1972), p.92, 1448a.

3. "... *quod in Comoedia mediocres fortunae hominum, parvi impetus periculaque, laetique sunt exitus actionum. At in Tragoedia, omnia contraria ...*" Evanthius, *De Tragoedia et Comoedia*, in Publii Terentii, *Comoediae Sex* (N.P., 1644); translated by Nevill Coghill, "The Basis of Shakespearian Comedy", *Essays and Studies*, 3 (1950) 1-28, 2.

4. "*Comoedia a tragoedia differt, quod in tragoedia introducuntur heroes duces reges, in comoedia humiles atque privatae [personae].*" Diomedes, *Artis Grammaticae*, in Georgius Kaibel, editor, *Comicorum Graecorum Fragmenta* (Berlin, 1899, revised 1958), Vol.I, p.58. Translated by Coghill, p.2.

5. "*Comoedia est fabula diuersa instituta continens affectuum ciuilium ac priuatorum ...*", Donatus, *De Comoedia*, in Kaibel, Vol.I, p.67; translated by Coghill, p.3.

> Comedy differs, moreover, from other forms in the subject matter which it treats; for it imitates the actions of the lower, meaner people, and therefore differs from Tragedy, which imitates the better sort of people, as Aristotle also shows.[6]

And Castelvetro in his 1570 commentary, *Poetica d'Aristotle vulgarizzata et sposta*, pronounces:

> The royal state and the private state are the considerations which divide poetry into its species.[7]

This notion of the characters necessary to comedy persisted in England. Puttenham repeats the definitions in *Of Poets and Poesy* (1589); he defines comedies as plays

> ... that debated the matters of the world, sometimes of their owne priuate affaires, sometimes of their neighbours, but neuer medling with any Princes matters nor such high personages, but commonly of marchants, souldiers, artificers, good honest housholders, and also of vnthrifty youthes, yong damsels, old nurses, bawds, brokers, ruffians and parasites, with such like, in whose behauiors, lyeth in effect the whole course and trade of mans life.[8]

Renaissance comic theory provides a clear prescription for the characters required in comedy. Nonetheless, surviving scripts and criticism reveal that the actual comedy of Tudor England did not always follow the rules. Whetstone criticized the English comedy as "most vaine, indiscreete, and out of order", partly because it went outside the proper comic cast: it "bringeth Gods form Heauen, and fetcheth Diuels from Hel."[9] Certainly the popular comedy-romances of the 1570s violated the neoclassical proprieties by bringing into the comic sphere the royal personages suitable to tragedy. For example, *Clyomon and Clamydes* not only features fictional princes and princesses but brings them before the historical figure of Alexander the Great. Lyly's comedies of the 1580s mingled kings, heroes, gods and goddesses with tradesmen, rustics, servants, and other private citizens, so that by the time the romantic comedies of Greene and Shakespeare came to the stage in the late 1580s and 1590s their mixed casts of rustics and royalty were no longer a breach of comic practice. Nevertheless some dramatists still clung to neoclassical decorum. Jonson,

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6. "*... differt etiam comoedia ab aliis materie rerum subiectarum, quas tractat; nam imitatur actiones hominum humiliores, & viliores; & ideo differt à tragoedia, quae praestantiores imitatur, vt idem exponit Aristoteles.*" Francisci Robortelli, "Explicatio Eorum Omnium, Quae ad Comoediae Artificium Pertinent", in *Aristotelis De Arte Poetica Explicationes* (Florence, 1548), p.41; translated by Marvin T. Herrick, *Comic Theory in the Sixteenth Century* (Urbana, 1964), p.227.

7. "*Lo stato reale, e'l privato, le quali due sole parti partono e separano la poesia e la dividono in ispetie.*" Quoted and translated by H. B. Charlton, *Castelvetro's Theory of Poetry*, Publications of the University of Manchester, Comparative Literature Series, 1 (Manchester, 1913), p.107. See also Andrew Bongiorno, *Castelvetro on the Art of Poetry*, Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 29 (Binghampton, New York, 1984), pp.23-24.

8. George Puttenham, *The Arte of English Poesie*, ed. Gladys Doidge Willcock and Alice Walker (Cambridge, 1936), p.32.

9. George Whetstone, in the Dedication to *Promos and Cassandra* (1578), in Smith, Vol.I, p.59.

in the Prologue to *Every Man in his Humour*, insists that his play disdains to "serve the ill customs of the age" but will present instead "deeds, and language, such as men do use:/ And persons, such as Comedy would choose."[10] Jonson reiterates the humble cast required for comedy in the Prologue to *A Tale of a Tub*:

> No state affairs, nor any politic club,
> Pretend we in our tale, here, of a tub.
> But acts of clowns and constables, today
> Stuff out the scenes of our ridiculous play.[11]

The theoretical restrictions on comic characters persisted throughout the Tudor period, yet in practice the English form of comedy often included characters outside the traditional cast of private citizens.

This paradox stems from the fact that comedy was essentially a received classical form which was gradually assimilated into the popular English theatre. English critics of the 1580s such as Webbe and Puttenham still thought of comedy as a specifically classical form requiring their rather schoolmasterly explanations of its history and etymology.[12] The plays of Plautus and especially of Terence were considered to be the apotheosis of the comic form; the native traditions of humorous drama did not constitute "comedy" in this neoclassical sense.[13] The English comedy, like its counterparts in Italy and Germany, developed in conscious imitation of the classical drama.

Yet gradually a particularly English form of comedy did evolve from the Renaissance enthusiasm for imitation of the classics. It included images of contemporary English society and motifs from native dramatic traditions, but the English comedy also changed the structure of the classical model in important ways. This thesis contends that the treatment of character was one such development. Countless critics have remarked on the extraordinary individualization and naturalness of the characters of Shakespearean comedy, but the explanation for this lies beyond Shakespeare's own sympathetic genius.

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10. Ben Jonson, *The Complete Plays*, edited by G. A. Wilkes (Oxford, 1981), Vol.I, p.183, lines 4, 21-22.
11. Jonson, in Wilkes, Vol.I, p.6, lines 1-4. Herrick comments, "The doctrine of decorum, as formulated by the Horatian and Aristotelian commentators ... underlies Ben Jonson's praise of ancient drama and his censure of nearly all native English drama save his own." Marvin T. Herrick, *The Fusion of Horatian and Aristotelian Literary Criticism 1531-1555*, Illinois Studies in Language and Literature, Vol.32, No.1 (Urbana, 1946), p.56.
12. Their continental contemporaries, like Scaliger, shared this sense. See Webbe in Smith, Vol.I, pp.248-249; Puttenham in Smith, Vol.II, pp.33-35.
13. Mystery and morality plays included many humorous episodes; and the sixteenth century seems to have continued a healthy tradition of native farce, although few were transcribed.

These "natural" characters spring from the same dramatic tradition as Jonson's fiercely stylized "humours" characters, a tradition which accorded characterization a privileged position within comic structure. This thesis explores the relationship between characterization and comic structure in the experimental comedies of the Tudor period.

In the drama characters function as both form and content; they serve to divide a play's action and language into parts for performance, yet the play describes the interactions and relationships of these same parts.[14] The classical and neoclassical theory of comedy known to the Tudor dramatists concentrated on the value of characters as dramatic subjects -- as we have seen in the quotations above, much emphasis was given to the type of people which the characters were to represent -- but here I shall consider the Tudor scripts from a more formal perspective and concentrate on the characters and the playwright's use of characterization as aspects of the dramatic structure.

Character and Narrative

Comedy in its classical and Renaissance form was always constructed around a narrative premise, and any discussion of comic structure must consider the dramatist's treatment of narrative. Narrative has traditionally been a major issue in comic theory. In the *Poetics* Aristotle records that all drama represents "people doing things", and in the brief summary of comedy he states that comic action requires "generalized stories or plots" which, unlike tragic plots, end without death in a friendly conclusion.[15] Another Greek definition exists in the anonymous, undated *Tractatus Coislinianus*; the author applies Aristotelian and later Peripatetic theories to comic action and states, "Comedy is an imitation of a laughable action, [and] of undivided and completed length."[16] Although the *Tractatus Coislinianus* was unknown in the Renaissance, its emphasis on a single and completed action is reflected in the critical tradition. For example, Trissino wrote in his *Poetica* (1563),

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14. See Boris Eichenbaum, "The Theory of the 'Formal Method', in *Russian Formalist Criticism*, translated and edited by Lee T. Lemon and Marion J. Reis (Lincoln, 1965), pp.99-139, p.113, regarding the aesthetic challenge of form understood as content.

15. 1448a and 1449b, on pages 92 and 96 of Russell and Winterbottom.

16. See G. M. A. Grube, *The Greek and Roman Critics* (London, 1965), p.144. The *Tractatus Coislinianus* is reprinted in Greek in Kaibel, Vol.I, pp.50-53, and is translated in Lane Cooper, *An Aristotelian Theory of Comedy* (Oxford, 1924), pp.224-226.

> Comedy ... imitates an action single, complete, and large, which has a beginning, a middle, and an end.[17]

The progress of the comic narrative was another major element of comic theory. Donatus and Evanthius stressed Aristotle's observation that comic plots moved from trouble to prosperity, and this was the determining feature in the medieval notion of comedy.[18] Dante mentions in his letter to Can Grande della Scala (1319) that

> ... tragedy in the beginning is good to look upon and quiet, in its end or exit is fetid and horrible; ... Comedy, however, at the beginning deals with the harsh aspect of some affair, but its matter terminates prosperously.[19]

These standard descriptions of comedy and tragedy persisted in the Renaissance: the English dictionaries of Junius and Higgins (1588), Florio (1598), and Cotgrave (1611) include them in their definitions of the terms.[20] William Webbe, writing in 1586, continues the tradition: comedies, he says, "beginning doubtfully, drewe to some trouble or turmoyle, and by some lucky chaunce alwayes ended to the ioy and appeasement of all parties".[21] (Other sixteenth-century critics put a moral interpretation onto the traditional comic narrative: Whetstone explained, "For by the rewarde of the good the good are encouraged in wel doinge: and with the scowrge of the lewde the lewde are feared from euill attempts."[22])

Once again this superficial theory of comic narrative addresses action as the content rather than as the form of drama. However, a more complex theory was devised by a number of classical and neoclassical scholars who analyzed the formal methods by which the dramatist shaped the action into the traditional scenes and acts. This Donatan line of inquiry is recorded in the works of T. W. Baldwin, Marvin T. Herrick, Bernard Weinberg, and Douglas Radcliff-Umstead and need not be addressed here.[23]

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17. "*La Comedia ... imita una attione sola, compiuta, e grande, laquale habbia principio, mezo, e fine.*" *La Quinta e la Sesta Divisione della Poetica del Trissino* (Venice, 1563), p.30; translated by Allan H. Gilbert, *Literary Criticism: Plato to Dryden* (New York, 1940), p.224.
18. See Coghill's discussion pp.1-6.
19. "*... tragedia in principio est admirabilis et quieta, in fine seu exitu est fetida et horribilis; ... Comedia vero inchoat asperitatem alicuius rei, sed eius materia prospere terminatur.*" Epistole XIII, 29, in *Le Opere di Dante*, edited by M. Barbi et. al., second edition (Firenze, 1960), p.405. English translation from Gilbert, pp.203-204.
20. See Madeleine Doran, *Endeavors of Art* (Madison, 1964), Appendix 2, pp.332-334.
21. Webbe, in Smith, Vol.I, p.249.
22. Whetstone, in Smith, Vol.I, p.59.
23. T. W. Baldwin, *Shakspere's Five-Act Structure* (Urbana, 1947). Marvin T. Herrick, *Italian Comedy in the Renaissance* (Urbana, 1960), and *Tragicomedy* (Urbana, 1962). Bernard Weinberg, *A History of Literary Criticism in the Italian Renaissance* (Chicago, 1961). Douglas Radcliff-Umstead, *The Birth of Modern Comedy in Renaissance Italy* (Chicago, 1969).

The formal relationship of characterization and narrative in the comic plot has not, however, received much attention, yet it is crucial for the present discussion. Terentian characterization, as understood in sixteenth-century criticism, was absolutely subservient to the narrative sequence.[24] Yet, as we shall see, the characterizations of English comedy often followed more independent agendas -- authorial interest, thematic relevance, or popular theatrical traditions -- thus offering a relief to the claims of narrative. Therefore, in considering the place of characterization in dramatic structure this investigation will emphasize the relation of characters to narrative.

Terms and Methods

For these purposes it is helpful to adopt some of the terms of evaluation used in the Formalist inquiry into prose narrative and its related motifs. Shklovsksy and Tomashevsky described the causal-temporal sequence of events in the narrative as the "story" (*fabula*) and the artist's arrangement of the material as the "plot" (*syuzhet*).[25] That distinction is preserved in the use of "story" and "plot" here. Within this frame of reference, they called the characters necessary to the story's completion "bound" and those outside the story but nevertheless part of the plot "free". I have turned this method of evaluation to the characters of drama. An analysis of a play's use of bound and free characters can reveal something of its structural priorities in the relation of narrative and characterization. Within the plot some characters may retain a single function and meaning over the course of the play; others may change, reform, or, to use a term of the modern theatre, develop. Tomashevsky used the words "dynamic" and "static" to refer to changing and non-changing characters, and this sense is preserved in the following pages.[26] The static-dynamic comparison can also throw light on the dominance of narrative or the characters' independence of it.

Characterization in the form of textual description is obviously evidence of an author's interest in his character, and the quantity of such textual characterization in a comedy is relevant to our inquiry here. This may appear in the spoken lines or the stage

24. See Edwin W. Robbins, *Dramatic Characterization in Printed Commentaries on Terence, 1473-1600*, Illinois Studies in Language and Literature 35 (Urbana, 1951), pp.96-109.
25. See Victor Shklovsky, "Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*: Stylistic Commentary", in Lemon and Reis, pp.57. Boris Tomashevsky, "Thematics", in Lemon and Reis, pp.66-88. Ann Jefferson, "Russian Formalism", in *Modern Literary Theory*, ed. Jefferson and David Robey (Totowa, 1986), pp.39-40.
26. Tomashevsky, p.89.

directions. A related form of textual characterization is the use of characteristic verbal idiosyncrasies: word choice, grammar, imagery, and rhetorical patterns. The presence of such verbal stylization heightens the characterization by disguising the authorial voice and promoting the illusion of independent speakers.

Textual references may also create the illusion of a character's life offstage, outside the play. These "extensions" beyond the immediate dramatic circumstances may in fact bear meaning for the play's development, in which case they are "motivated" in the narrative (as, for example, the standard device in which one character's memory proves another character's identity and so provides the key to the dramatic resolution). If, however, the use of character extension is "independent", it may betray a particular interest in the character sketch for its own sake.

The methods of evaluation outlined so far have centred on the evidence of characterization in the comic text. But characterization, like most aspects of the theatre, is a collaborative creation, and we cannot ignore the contributions of the actors and audiences in determining the meaning of characters in a play. Of course the visual and aural aspects of a performance are profoundly informative of a character's meaning; yet these ephemeral details of Tudor theatre are lost to modern scholars, and despite the impressive theatrical scholarship of recent years we cannot recreate a performed characterization without hazardous conjecture.

However, certain theatrical traditions of characterization are preserved in the play scripts. In particular, the recurrence of specific character types reflects something of what was popular with Tudor players and audiences. The idiosyncrasies of the braggarts, pedants and constables that populate the Renaissance repertoire carry the authority of popular tradition: the audience knew what to expect from such characters, and the actors knew what to play. The presence of these traditional characterizations, or variations on them, in a comedy may therefore reflect the dramatist's purposes, whether they be to cater to a popular response and present a favourite character regardless of narrative context, or to fill in the narrative requirements with a readily available character type.

These, then, are some of the major areas of investigation in assessing the position of characterization in comic structure. In this thesis I shall consider in depth the structural

function of characterization in six individual Tudor comedies. From these separate analyses I shall compare the similar aspects of their structures and contrast the changes in the relationship of characterization and narrative in order to observe the development of the English comic form in the sixteenth century.

Definition of Comedy

In identifying certain plays as "comedies" one enters a semantic tangle of sixteenth-century genre theory. As the remarks quoted above have indicated, Renaissance definitions of comedy included various combinations of the following criteria: a plot progressing from trouble to peace, the unities of place, time and action, private characters, "low" diction, didactic intentions, moral exempla, social satire, the ridiculous, the probable and realistic, and a five-act structure of classical proportions. As well, most neoclassical theory implies that comedies should be as much like the plays of Terence as possible. However, the practices of the Tudor theatre demonstrate a much more flexible use of genre terms. Plays are often described differently in the performance title, printed title, prologue, and Stationers' Register entry. *Cambises* is described variously as "a lamentable Tragedie", "a Comedie", and a "tragicall history"; *All for Money* is at once a "moral and Pitiefvl Comedie" and a "pleasant Tragedie".[27] The popular epithet "tragical comedy" confuses matters further. Gayley points out the promoter's interest in genre in what he calls the "advertisement of levity" in titles and prologues which falsely promise that the plays are comedies in order to attract larger audiences.[28]

Amidst this semantic confusion I have decided to define comedy in purely structural terms. It would be absurd to insist on criteria of comedy ignored by the playwrights. Therefore I have defined a comedy simply as a kind of play representing a completed action by human characters in which the events are causally linked and progress from an initially troubled situation to a peaceful resolution.

This definition excludes many plays which call themselves "comedies" in their titles or prologues, but as I have indicated, such attributions were often made indiscriminately. In particular my definition excludes the large number of plays known as

27. Kerstin Assarsson-Rizzi, *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay: A Structural and Thematic Analysis of Robert Greene's Play*, Lund Studies in English 44 (Lund, 1972), p.18.
28. Charles Mills Gayley, *Plays of our Forefathers and Some of the Traditions upon which the Plays were Founded* (London and New York, 1908), Appendix B, pp.334-338.

moralities or moral interludes. Although this strong native tradition often involves humorous elements also found in comedy -- low characters, low diction, deception, disguise, slapstick -- the morality plays are fundamentally different in structure. Whereas comedies represent human action, moralities represent psychomachia, or conflict within the soul, and their characters usually represent abstract values. They are not necessarily causal in construction; like the medieval sermon, the morality presents situations and events on the basis of clear moral contrasts.[29] For the structural interests of this thesis I have found it more fruitful to consider the influence of the moralities on the neoclassical form than to expand my survey to include a wider range of plays.

Examples of Tudor Comedy

The six plays discussed in the following chapters are all examples of Tudor comedy, and they are presented in chronological order, in so far as the uncertain dates of the plays will permit. They are *Johan Johan* (c.1520), attributed to John Heywood; *Roister Doister* (c.1552) by Nicholas Udall; *Misogonus* (c.1570), variously attributed to Anthony Rudd, Laurence Johnson, and others; *Endimion* (c.1588) by John Lyly; *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* (c.1589) by Robert Greene; and *Love's Labour's Lost* (c.1595) by William Shakespeare. Although questions of date and authorship continue to dog these plays I shall not attempt to answer them here; instead I shall refer the reader to the relevant scholarship.

My discussions of these comedies focus on the dramatists' methods of characterization and on the role of this characterization in the different play structures. The six plays are quite different in form and style: *Johan Johan* echoes the French farce; *Misogonus* employs aspects of the morality play; and *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* dramatizes favourite features of the prose romance. None of these plays are "typical"; on the contrary, each is in some sense an experiment. In the final chapter I shall gather the structural results of these experiments and look for evidence of a developing national form of comedy. The presentation and function of characters in these English comedies may

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29. See the related discussions of Glynne Wickham, Bernard Spivack, and Peter Happé. Wickham, *Shakespeare's Dramatic Heritage* (London, 1969), pp.24-41. Spivack, *Shakespeare and the Allegory of Evil* (New York, 1958). Happé, *Four Morality Plays* (Harmondsworth, 1979), pp.9-18.

provoke as much interest for their formal ingenuity as for their delightful depictions of personality.

CHAPTER 2

INNOVATIONS IN THE TUDOR INTERLUDE: HEYWOOD'S *JOHAN JOHAN*

The Mery Play betwene Johan Johan the husbande, Tyb his wyfe and Syr Jhan the preest is an admirably compact piece of work. Though the play contains but three characters and comprises less than 700 lines it is a detailed and lively comedy. The story concerns Johan Johan, who suspects that his wife Tyb is cuckolding him with the lecherous priest, Sir Jhan, yet cannot bring himself to beat her into submission as he privately longs to do. Tyb intimidates him into inviting the priest to supper. At the meal Johan Johan is sent to mend a pail by the fire where he watches hungrily while Tyb and Syr Jhan consume all the food and share some suggestive stories. Finally his frustration, hunger and jealousy erupt into violence and he beats the culprits out of his house. His triumph is short-lived as his fears of his wife's adultery return and he goes off to find her.

Johan Johan is generally acknowledged as the first English play to develop a plot consisting of humourous action for its own sake, independent of religious or moral concerns.[1] In the 1520s and 30s, when Heywood published his plays, the neoclassical comedy had little representation on the English stage;[2] "comic" action was more typically a subsidiary element in the morality plays and interludes that dominated the English drama. In Heywood's other works, for example, narrative action merely serves as a frame for disputation and debate.[3] T. W. Craik comments on the uniqueness of *Johan Johan*,

> Heywood elsewhere virtually dispenses with plot (in the sense of a chain of causally-connected events leading up to a climax), and uses very little stage action. In this he is like the writers of contemporary moral interludes (*Youth* and *Hickscorner*, for example) ...[4]

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1. See F. S. Boas, "Early English Comedy", in *The Cambridge History of English Literature*, edited by A. W. Ward and A. R. Waller (Cambridge, 1932), Vol. V, p.91; also Ian Maxwell, *French Farce and John Heywood* (Melbourne, 1946), p.11.
2. For the biography of John Heywood (c. 1497-1578) see Robert Carl Johnson's *John Heywood*, Twayne's English Author Series, 92 (New York, 1970). A. W. Reed discusses Heywood's associations with contemporary humanist writers in *John Heywood and his Friends* (London, 1917), and in *Early Tudor Drama: Medwall, the Rastells, Heywood, and the More Circle* (London, 1926).
3. Joel B. Altman remarks, "Their nomenclature, in fact, suggests that they were considered games of wit on designated subjects played by the speakers." Altman, *The Tudor Play of Mind* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, 1978), p.107.
4. T. W. Craik, "Experiment and Variety in John Heywood's Plays", *Renaissance Drama* 7 (1964) 6-11, 6.

Witty and Witless is a straightforward debate on an abstract theme: is it better to be wise or foolish? Likewise *Gentleness and Nobility*, sometimes attributed to Heywood, is constructed around a philosophical dialogue.[5] In Heywood's *The Play of Love* the disputants speak from their own experiences in debating the relative pains and pleasures of various conditions of love, an argument which nevertheless remains abstract. *The Play of the Weather* features eight entertaining arguments for the most desirable type of weather. While *Love* and *Weather* both include amusing character sketches, the primary appeal of these plays lies in the examination of various points of view through the disputations and their ultimate synthesis.[6] *The Pardoner and the Friar* and *The Four PP* are likewise constructed around verbal competitions and arguments, while also satirizing several clerical types. Although the irreverent, farcical tone of these plays is closer to *Johan Johan* than to Heywood's other works, their structures are based on disputation while *Johan Johan* is organized around a narrative of sequential action.

The singularity of *Johan Johan*'s construction in the context of the English drama of the early sixteenth century has been noted by various scholars. It has usually been explained by the play's indebtedness to fifteenth-century French farce. In a seminal article of 1904, Karl Young concluded,

> From the English point of view, Heywood's plays were an entire novelty, for, free from logical connection with previous English drama, they are in model and inspiration wholly foreign -- they are frank adaptations or imitations of French farce.[7]

Following Gustave Cohen's 1949 publication of fifty-three previously unknown farces, *Recueil de Farces Françaises Inédites du XV^e Siècle*, it became evident that *Johan Johan* was in fact a direct translation of *Farce nouvelle très bonne et fort joyeuse du Pasté et est à trois personnaiges. C'est assavoir: l'Homme, la Femme, le Curé*, the nineteenth play in Cohen's collection.[8] T. W. Craik's and William Elton's articles of 1950 demonstrate the

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5. *Gentleness and Nobility* has also been ascribed to Heywood's father-in-law, John Rastell. For discussion of the authorship see C. F. Tucker Brooke, "*Gentleness and Nobility*: The Authorship and Source", *Modern Language Review* 6 (1911) 458-461; also Chapter 5 of Johnson's *John Heywood*. A. W. Reed reviews the arguments surrounding the authorship of all the plays attributed to Heywood in *The Canon of John Heywood's Plays* (London, 1918).

6. See Altman, p.107.

7. Karl Young, "The Influence of French Farce upon the Plays of John Heywood", *Modern Philology* 2 (1904) 97-124, 123.

8. Gustave Cohen, editor, *Recueil de Farces Françaises Inédites du XV^e Siècle* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1949), pp.145-158.

methods of the translation, and Howard Norland's more recent essay discusses the shift in emphasis and meaning indicated by the differences between the English and French texts.[9] This evidence does much to explain *Johan Johan*'s unique appearance amidst the English plays of the period, although it leaves many important questions unanswered. Why was the farce translated? Was the translator actually Heywood, as has long been assumed?[10] Did Heywood know the *Farce du Pasté* in performance? And if so, did the English production imitate the French in its performance style?

Although William Rastell published the play in 1533, there is no documentation of a Tudor production of *Johan Johan*. The domestic scene and the close proximity of actors, audience, and doors indicate an indoor performance.[11] The adulterous story and small cast size suggest that adults were more likely to have performed the play than children;[12] and the audience is addressed in masculine titles ("Syrs" and "Maysters"), though this may not be significant. Beyond these hints there is virtually no evidence. Neither the play's performance nor its publication (without the name of its author) seems to have made much impact on the drama of the day. A. W. Pollard writes rather regretfully that, in adopting the French form, Heywood "did not lay the foundation of English comedy, for it was not on these lines that comedy subsequently developed".[13] But Pollard is perhaps too hasty. As Norland points out, in translating the *Farce du Pasté* the translator anglicizes the play in various ways, not least in its characterization.[14] By

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9. T. W. Craik, "The True Source of John Heywood's *Johan Johan*", *Modern Language Reivew* 45 (1950) 289-295. William Elton, *Times Literary Supplement*, 24 February 1950, p.128. Howard B. Norland, "Formalizing English Farce: *Johan Johan* and its French Connection", *Comparative Drama* 17 (1983) 141-152.

10. For the specific arguments for attributing *Johan Johan* to Heywood, see Reed, *Canon*, p.46; Craik, "True Source", p.292; Boas, pp.89-99; and R. de la Bère, *John Heywood, Entertainer* (London, 1937), pp.83-87. Charles William Wallace ascribes authorship to William Cornish instead in *The Evolution of English Drama up to Shakespeare* (Berlin, 1912), pp.50-53; David Klein suggests instead that the play was written by Sir Thomas More, *Milestones to Shakespeare* (New York, 1970), pp.25-28.

11. Richard Southern considers the potential staging of *Johan Johan* in a Tudor great hall in *The Staging of Plays before Shakespeare* (London, 1973), pp.244-250.

12. Although contemporary records recount Heywood making plays with "boys", particularly those of St Paul's, of Heywood's extant plays only *Weather* corresponds to the numbers of a boys' company with its ten roles; the other five plays are restricted to the standard touring company size of four roles. See A. P. Rossiter, *English Drama from Early Times to the Elizabethans* (London, 1950, reprinted 1958), p.112. Boys' plays of the 1520s and 30s were not nearly as saucy as those of their Jacobean counterparts. See T. H. Vail Motter, *The School Drama in England* (London, New York, and Toronto, 1929), p.64; also Johnson, *John Heywood*, p.107.

13. Alfred W. Pollard, "John Heywood", in *Representative English Comedies*, edited by Charles Mills Gayley (New York, 1916), p.16.

14. Norland, p.142.

examining *Johan Johan* more closely we can see that its character types resemble those of other English plays and that its structural use of characterization anticipates future developments in English comedy.

The three characters of *Johan Johan* are fundamentally equivalent to those of *Farce du Pasté*: a husband, his wife, and her lover, a cleric. In the French play the characters are designated by these social roles in the play's subtitle and appear in the speech headings as L'Homme, La Femme, and Le Curé. Within the dialogue L'Homme is called Jehan-Jehannín (a name traditionally given to cuckolds in French folklore)[15] and Le Curé is called Guillaume; La Femme remains nameless (unless she is the "Marion" of line 83). In the English version the characters are individualized with names throughout. The title introduces the characters with both social functions and individual names, and unlike the French version it gives top billing to the characters, not the pie. In translation Johan Johan loses the comic connotations of his name; but the priest, Syr Jhan, gains the standard name for an English clergyman as well as the irony of sharing the husband's name.[16] The wife is now named Tyb, another common English name with comic associations of garrulousness.[17] All three characters are developed from their French counterparts in small but significant ways; this would seem to show the author's interest in characterization.

The character of Johan Johan is entirely bound to the narrative structure. He is absolutely necessary to the play's story: the character effects changes in the action, and is in turn changed by developments in the action. Indeed the play's dramatic interest consists of pushing this submissive personality further and further with more and more affronts until at last he takes uncharacteristic action and fights back. At the last moment of the play, however, Johan Johan relapses into his essential insecurity: decorum of character triumphs after all. In this sense one might describe the play as a character study, although it is obvious that humour takes precedence over psychology. At all events the characterization of Johan Johan carries considerable narrative weight.

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15. Craik, "True Source", p.293.
16. The corrupt priest of *Misogonus* is also named Sir John.
17. *Roister Doister* features a chatty maid called Tibet Talkapace, and *Misogonus* includes a talkative old gossip, Isbell Busby, who is also known as Tib.

The characterization of Johan Johan is neatly established. The role is defined clearly and simply by social relationships: he is Tyb's husband and Syr Jhan's parishioner and former clerk. The emotional relationships are also explicit: he is suspicious of and angry with Tyb, although he is intimidated by her; and he mistrusts Syr Jhan's lecherous reputation. The structural relationship between Johan Johan and Syr Jhan goes beyond their repetitive names; as the priest takes over more and more of the husband's attributes (his wife, his home, his supper) the implicit contrast between the two characters becomes sharper and more defined, especially in Tyb's treatment of the two men. The English translator rewrites the ending of the French farce, bringing a new emphasis and meaning to Johan Johan's characterization. The *Farce du Pasté* ends with the brawl between the three characters, with L'Homme beating Le Curé with a sack full of bread and the outcome not yet decided. In the English play Johan Johan wins the fight and beats the other two out of the house. He stays to gloat to the audience but is soon overtaken by suspicions that

> ... he and she
> Wyll make me cokold/ euyn to anger me.
> (678-679)[18]

After his short-lived change of character to a violent, masterful husband Johan Johan reverts to his original role of worrying aloud to the audience. (This time, however, he does go off in search of the guilty pair.) As Howard Norland observes, "The English ending is not only more subtle than the French version, but also it focuses much more fully on the ironic dimension of the central comic character."[19] In the English translation characterization has become such a central feature of the play's structure that a new resolution of the play and the character is required. This addition to the ending, like the twenty lines added to the opening monologue, is evidence of a shift of structural emphasis onto the character's individual journey from beginning to end, through the situations and configurations already set up in the French farce.

The characters of Tyb and Syr Jhan are constructed within the narrative frame as well; they too are bound to the story and are agents of the action. Like Johan Johan their characterizations as individual personalities are central to the play's structure: Tyb must be

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18. All line references from *Johan Johan the Husband*, ed. G. R. Proudfoot and S. W. Wells, Malone Society Reprints (Oxford, 1967, reprinted 1972).
19. Norland, p.147.

shrewish and Syr Jhan must be lecherous for the situations of the play to have meaning. Their characterizations are however static and remain constant throughout the play. While Tyb and Syr Jhan are very similar to their French counterparts, the two plays use the characters differently. In Heywood's version their static characterizations are more heavily weighted in order to highlight the fixed opposition to Johan Johan's struggle in his dynamic characterization.

Tyb, for example, is considerably more bold-faced about her adultery than La Femme. As Norland points out, Tyb brazenly acknowledges her husband's suspicions in the first scene, rather than resorting to tears as La Femme does;[20] and in the third scene she calls Johan Johan a cuckold and laughs at the

> ... prety Jape
> For a wyfe/ to make her husband her ape.
> (516-517)

This line stresses the wife's power much more than the French original:

> Par monserment, c'est bien pour rire
> D'ung homme qui folie maine.
> (557-558)[21]

Tyb's abrasive character is heightened still further by the textual description of her offensive body odour which is made much of in the English additions to the farce. Johan Johan says in his opening monologue,

> And I shall beate her by cokkes bones
> That she shall stynke lyke a pole kat
> But yet by goggs body that nede nat
> For she wyll stynke without any betyng
> For euery nyght ones she gyueth me an hetyng
> From her issueth suche a stynkyng smoke
> That the sauour therof almost doth me choke.
> (73-79)

Such details do not change the structural function of the wife's character in the play (as the obstacle which the husband must conquer); rather they lock the characterization more firmly into its negative role in the narrative structure. The woman in the English play is drawn as a corporal grotesque; the probable casting of a male actor to play the part in a Tudor production would doubtless have taken the misogynist humour to extreme lengths.[22]

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20. Norland, pp.144-145.

21. All line references are from *Farce nouvelle tres bonne et fort joyeuse du Pasté et est a trois personnaiges: c'est assavoir L'homme, la Femme, le Curé*, in Cohen, pp.145-158.

22. The grotesque characterization of women seems to have been a comic staple in Tudor humour. Skelton's *Elynour Rummyng* thrives on scabrous description; and similar character sketches are given in the braggart's

In the same way Syr Jhan is developed as a scoundrel in more explicit detail than Le Curé. Again Norland lists the notable variants from the French text: Syr Jhan admits his philandering directly to the gullible Johan Johan, explaining that it was a test of Tyb's virtue:

> I do lye uppon her/ many a tyme and oft
> To prove her/ yet could I neuer espy
> That euer any/ dyd wors with her than I.
> (352-354)

As well, in the final brawl Syr Jhan calls Johan Johan a cuckold to his face.[23] The other significant change in the priest's characterization comes in his after-dinner stories of miracles. Syr Jhan is much more actively involved in these good works than Le Curé, who attributes them to the intervention of St Arnoul. Syr Jhan, though, declares that he personally has helped the women to their miraculous pregnancies.

> But when that he comen home agayn was
> He found his wyfe/ and with her chyldren seuen
> Whiche she had had/ in the mene space
> Yet had she not had/ so many by thre
> Yf she had not had/ the help of me
> Is not this a myracle/ yf euer were any
> (547-552)

Norland comments that these alterations to Syr Jhan's character from the French script reinforce "the abuse of his clerical role that informs his relationship with Tib as it emphasizes the clerical satire", with the result that "the priest is perceived more negatively than in the French version."[24] In short the English extensions to the priest's characterization heighten the character's meaning of duplicity, guile, and corruption which infiltrate the husband's world in the narrative.

The opposition of static and dynamic characterizations informs the construction of the play on textual and performance levels. The translator's decision to make Johan Johan a "developing" character, in opposition to the fixed sinful values of Tyb and Syr Jhan, clearly privileges the husband in the audience's interest. This privilege is borne out by

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description of his mother in *Thersites* (sometimes attributed to Heywood), and Folie's account of his wife in Lindsay's *Ane Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis*. Craik points out that, while not a feature of the *Farce du Pasté*, such complaints occur frequently in French farce,as in the *Farce du Pect* and *Tarabin-Tarabas*. Craik, "True Source", p.294, ff.7-9.

23. Norland, p.145.

24. Norland, pp.148-149.

Johan Johan's intimate relationship with the audience. His long opening monologue begins with a greeting and a question addressed directly to the audience:

> God spede you maysters everychone
> Wote ye not whyther my wyfe is gone
> (1-2)

The spectators are immediately involved in the problems of Johan Johan's world. The ensuing monologue, played directly to the audience throughout, makes the spectators privy to Johan Johan's secret hopes and fears, and this intimate acquaintance sets up the public-versus-private humour which runs throughout the play. The tension between the husband's private rebellious thoughts and his outward submissive behaviour is one of the farce's basic jokes, and demands a particular performance technique from the actor. He must switch from private to public modes while giving the audience privileged access to both. This comedic business comes directly from French farce. It is still employed in twentieth-century acting, and there is no reason to expect that the technical means have changed much: the private line is delivered out to the audience with the conventional premise that it is inaudible to the other characters onstage, and the speaker is then "interrupted" by another character, to whom he must hastily turn in order to visibly "invent" a plausible substitution for his private line. This stage business is repeated six times in the first scene between Johan Johan and Tyb.[25] Two examples follow:

> **JOHAN [aside].**
> By cokkis soule/ nowe I dare lay a swan
> That she comes nowe streyght fro Syr Johan
> For ever whan she hath fatched of hym a lyk
> Than she comes home/ and syth she is syk
> **TYB.**
> What sayst thou.
> **JOHAN.**
> Mary I say
> It is mete for a woman to go play
> Abrode in the towne for an houre or two.
> (128-134)

> **TYB.**
> ... I never go to Syr Johan
> But I fynde hym lyke an holy man
> For eyther he is layenge his devotion
> Or els he is goynge in p[ro]cessyon.
> **JOHAN [aside].**
> Yea rounde about the bed doth he go
> You two together and no mo

25. See lines 131, 164, 179, 212, 228, 238; the device occurs again in the last scene at line 467.

And for to fynysshe the p[ro]cessyon
He lepeth up and thou lyest downe.
TYB.
What sayst thou
JOHAN.
Mary I say he doth well
For so ought a shepherde to do/ as I harde tell
For the salvation of all his folde.
(172-182)

Norland writes, "By expanding the number of asides from the French text the English translator extends the relationship with the audience as he seeks at the same time to heighten the comedy."[26] The interesting thing about this comic "bit" is that it implies multiple levels of character and requires the actor to communicate a certain depth or complexity in the performed characterization. The comic device presumes that a character's meaning includes his private thoughts as well as his words and actions. The character-image is given a psychological dimension (albeit in a cursory fashion). In *Johan Johan* this technique is used almost exclusively with the character of the husband;[27] it is of structural importance to the play as a whole in that the play traces the coming together of the husband's inner thoughts and outer actions, from disjunction to unity.

In the supper scene there is a similar tension between public and private modes. The distance between the table and the hearth is treated as if it put the characters plausibly out of earshot of one another;[28] not only does Johan Johan continue to share his thoughts with the audience, but Tyb and Syr Jhan exchange private remarks with each other. The spectators hear these interchanges as well, of course, but they are not an active party to them as they are to the remarks addressed directly to them by Johan Johan. The duplicity of Tyb and Syr Jhan is established in their characterizations early on, and it is enough for the audience to observe their guile in this scene at a certain remove. It is not important for the audience to be implicated in their sins, as it is in the English morality plays, in which the audience's awareness and enjoyment of deception makes it a party to vice (as, for example, the audience's complicity with the vices of *Mankynd, Youth,* and *Nature*). Instead the audience of *Johan Johan* endorses the protagonist, the hen-pecked husband, for whom the disparity between public and private is not a metaphor for deceit but an

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26. Norland, p.149.
27. Tyb has one such episode, lines 227-233.
28. Southern comments, "The convention is clearly designed to make the most out of the situation in a way best suited to divert an audience." Southern, p.245.

indication of psychological life. This is a radical departure from the typical use of characterization on the English stage. Although protagonist characters of the moral interludes frequently address audiences directly and confidentially, the normal content of such disclosures is self-narration which bridges the interactions with other characters (as in *Wyt and Science*). In contrast the farcical humour of *Johan Johan* depends on the constant contradictions between private thoughts and public actions. On the suggestion of French farce, typical English characterizations are adapted to include a suggestion of psychological life. *Johan Johan* is certainly not a psychologically complex play. It is scarcely more than anecdotal. But it describes the emotional and psychological processes of one individual's behaviour, and in doing so makes characterization crucial to the play's dramatic structure.

In creating life-like characters *Johan Johan* makes a restrained use of extended characterization. The playwright offers a certain amount of detail about the characters' (alleged) pasts and their off-stage lives, but all this information refers back to the story. For example, we hear of the elaborate history of the pie; Tyb's habit of feigning sickness after her trysts with Syr Jhan; Johan Johan's past position as Syr Jhan's clerk -- all of these details have immediate relevance to the characters' current, onstage situations and actions. Norland points out that the English translation reduces the mention of extraneous offstage characters from the *Farce du Pasté.*[29] The author is very tidy about motivating his characterizations in the narrative. His interest in character sketching does not displace the narrative priority.

Heywood enhances his characterizations by locating the characters in a specific realistic world. *Johan Johan* adopts its domestic setting from the *Farce du Pasté.* While they often occur in French farces, such localized, everyday interiors are unusual in English plays of the early sixteenth century.[30] Johan Johan's house is realized in considerable detail: the trestle table, stool, candlesticks, cups, pot, pail, hearth and fire, distaff, clipping shears, and coal shovel all figure in the action; and the warming and eating of a real pie is a central incident. The long comic episode at the end of the first scene in which the hapless Johan Johan is bullied into setting up the trestle table and stools, laying the table, washing the cups, and fetching the bread and ale creates humour by conjuring up

29. Norland, p.142.
30. See Southern, pp.244-246.

recognizable domestic realities; as J. B. Moore remarks, this scene also contributes to the illusion of recognizable characters.

> Here the incident is worked out for the purposes of comic characterization. ... How does he do it? By the appeal to such little, everyday businesses as dish-washing and pie-burning; by a very deft use of the realistic, he achieves the comic.[31]

This theatrical suggestion of everyday domestic life affects the characterizations, especially in performance and reception. The reality of the properties in the players' hands subliminally endorses the reality of the characters that wield them. This impression is literally forced on the audience with the props, as when Johan Johan asks a member of the audience to hold his gown for him:

> And if I shulde lay it on the harth bare
> It myght hap to be burned or I were ware
> Therfore I pray you take ye the payne
> To kepe my gowne tyll I come agayne
> But yet he shall not have it by my fay
> He is so nere the dore he myght ron away
> But bycause that ye be trusty and sure
> Ye shall kepe it and it be your pleasure
> And bycause it is arrayde at the skyrt
> Whyle ye do nothyng skrape of the dyrt.
> (249-258)[32]

The gown is real; the dirt is real; the two audience members are real; the door is real; the hearth and the fire are quite possibly real;[33] and the audience's non-sceptical belief in the reality of all this is a persuasive voucher for the reality of the character. The metatheatrical acknowledgement of the audience's presence is likewise treated as an obvious physical reality: the audience is indeed sitting right there, "nere the dore", and "do[ing] nothyng".[34] Yet Johan Johan does not necessarily "break character" in this exchange; the illusion can easily remain that of the husband taking off his gown, not the actor. Johan Johan's mounting distress in the last scene is grounded in similar concrete physical realities:

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31. John B. Moore, *The Comic and the Realistic in English Drama* (Chicago, 1925), p.99.

32. Considerable confusion exists over the assignment of these and the ensuing lines: Rastell's 1533 edition assigns Johan Johan consecutive speeches and seems to confuse his lines with Tyb's. For critical resolutions of the muddle see Robert Carl Johnson, "A Textual Problem in *Johan Johan*", *Notes and Queries* 17 (1970) 210-211; also Stanley Sultan, "The Audience-Participation Episode in *Johan Johan*", *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 52 (1953) 491-497.

33. See Southern, pp.245-246 regarding great hall staging practices.

34. Southern comments that the spectators "thus were for all practical purposes within the action itself", p.246. Robert Carl Johnson discusses the Tudor convention of players (especially vice characters) interacting with audiences physically and the implications of this episode in *Johan Johan* in "Audience Involvement in the Tudor Interlude", *Theatre Notebook* 24 (1970) 101-111.

... I chafe the wax
And I chafe it so hard/ that my fyngers krakke
And eke the smoke/ puttyth out my eyes two
I burne my face/ and ray my clothys also
And yet I dare nat say one word
And they syt laughyng/ yender at the bord.
(510-515)

His visibly real grievances give credence to his emotion. Similarly an audience watching a real pie disappear down the throats of "Tyb" and "Syr Jhan" is invited to believe that the *characters* have completed the real and human act of eating, and that by implication the characters are real and human.

This too is a departure from the conventions of the early Tudor stage. Medwall had invited his audience to believe in the reality of servants A and B in *Fulgens and Lucres* (1497) with the same emphasis on the physical reality of the common actor-audience space, but the other characters in that play remain firmly within theatrical conventions. In fact A and B stress in their opening scene that what follows is an artificial play by actors. *Johan Johan* never employs self-consciousness to such an extent: the presence of the audience is acknowledged, but the artifice is not. In *Johan Johan* the illusionism of the fiction is paramount; the recognition of character as metaphor is not operative, as it is in the moralities and moral interludes. Even compared to the other plays by Heywood, plays which include vivid character sketches, *Johan Johan* is extraordinary in its tight structural bonding of characterization and action. Indeed the bulk of Heywood's writing reflects a more typically English use of characterization: the characterization as a frame or decoration for one side of a dramatized argument, comparison, or debate. Illusionism is neither assumed nor intended in these plays; abstraction and stereotypification are the ruling principles.

Johan Johan is rather more reminiscent of the farcical plays from the mystery cycles. The marital squabbles between Noah and his Wife or Mak and Gill resemble those of Johan Johan and Tyb. The Tyb character particularly recalls these English shrews, although her geneaology descends through French farces and fabliaux as well.[35] Nonetheless it is important to note that an ongoing performance tradition of these characters, the hen-pecked husband and the shrewish wife, existed in the English theatre as

35. Sidney Lee cites considerable French influence on the English mystery plays as well. Lee, *The French Renaissance in England* (Oxford, 1910), pp.365-367. See also Moore, pp.32-35.

well as the French, and may have influenced the performed characterizations of *Johan Johan*. Structurally the mystery plays use the characterizations quite differently from the interludes and farces. In the grand cosmic plan of the cycle such characters are but minor diversions. Within the individual plays, however, the characters are bound and active in the narratives, and characterizations within an everyday, domestic world are a major feature of the humorous appeal.[36] Nonetheless the mystery characters, however familiar their characterizations may be, do not purport to be real; they remain symbols for biblical values and actions. Structurally, therefore, the characterizations of *Johan Johan* are quite different from those of the comic mystery plays.

The more one searches for analogues in the contemporary English drama, the more of a maverick work *Johan Johan* seems. One wonders what sort of reception it met with in performance. French players were popular at Henry VIII's court, and W. J. Lawrence speculates on their influence:

> Visits of the sort would account for the inspiration undoubtedly derived by John Heywood from Gallic *sotie* and farce ... [they] might have pleased the burly king so well in their original form as to create a desire on his part to have them ready to hand in the native repertory.[37]

Heywood was employed at court from 1519; otherwise there is little factual basis for Lawrence's optimistic theory. Still, it raises the possibility of *Johan Johan* being performed in an allusive, "French" style. It is difficult to guess what this might have meant to English actors or audiences, courtly or otherwise. Certainly physical comedy is a major element in many French farces; one imagines a bold, slapstick style of movement for the beatings, chases, disguises, and unexpected discoveries which frequently turn up in the scripts. The *Farce du Pasté* and *Johan Johan* both have comic episodes in this style: the husband's repeatedly interrupted exit at the end of the first scene (each time he tries to leave his wife calls him back to do another chore and then scolds him for lingering); the husband's repeated attempts to join the others at the supper table while the wife urges him to return to the hearth; and of course the three-handed brawl at the end. While grounded

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36. The minor roles of shepherds, carpenters, soldiers and mothers are fleshed out beyond their biblical functions to afford a common man's perspective on the epic events. See Moore, pp.1-66; Arnold Williams, "The Comic in the Cycles", *Medieval Drama*, Stratford-upon-Avon Studies, 16 (London, 1973), pp.109-123; Peter Happé's introduction to his edition of *English Mystery Plays* (Harmondsworth, 1975), p.32.

37. W. J. Lawrence, "Early French Players in England", in *The Elizabethan Playhouse and Other Studies* (Stratford-upon-Avon, 1912), p.128.

in a naturalistic setting, the broad comedy suggests an earthy, physical style of acting. The static characters of Tyb and Syr Jhan require a brazen, confident finish in performance to contrast with Johan Johan's developing characterization from submissive to assertive. This actor has the task of presenting both Johan Johan's inner and outer selves, which must contrast with each other and yet unite in the audience's reception of the character meaning. This structurally motivated character must appear in performance to be psychologically motivated as well. Johnson comments,

> In many ways farce depends on shallow characterization, a two-dimensional figure; and Johan Johan is treated two-dimensionally in the French play. But Heywood adds the third dimension; the mental conflict complements the physical conflict.[38]

Whether or not these performance elements found their way onto the Tudor stage is impossible to say.

The relationship of *Johan Johan* to other plays of the 1520s and 30s is ambiguous at best. Since the play comes from the French theatrical tradition of farce, *Johan Johan* seems to have little relevance to the contemporary English drama; and numerous critics would accept A. P. Rossiter's assertion that "Heywood stands rather by himself, contributing but little to subsequent comedy".[39] Yet *Johan Johan* demonstrates several structural principles of characterization which were to become increasingly prevalent as comedy developed in the Tudor period. First is the premise of narrative fiction: *Johan Johan* insists on the integrity of its story and contains its characters within the causal limits of its action. In this play the characters simply signify the personalities of the agents of the action; *Johan Johan* avoids any allegorical attempts to represent universal values or types by its characterization. The metaphorical potentiality of the character-device is curtailed in the cause of conveying the illusion of individual people. As a structural principle this simple use of characterization is familiar enough to modern audiences, but it was at odds with the bulk of English drama of the 1520s and 30s. Most of the contemporary recorded drama was constructed around moral and didactic aims, whereas *Johan Johan*, like most French farce, is amoral, secular, and seeks only to amuse.[40] As the sixteenth century

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38. Johnson, *John Heywood*, p.119.
39. Rossiter, p.112.
40. Johnson writes, "That Heywood was translating from a French farce should not change the estimate of Heywood's contribution; for, in *Johan Johan*, the play itself, not some authorial message, is the thing." *John Heywood*, p.134.

continued, this secular vein of humorous drama grew alongside the didactic tradition, and its simple character illusions were available to dramatists just as the more consciously metaphorical uses of the character-device were. In two plays from the middle of the century we can see the two trends of characterization clearly: the simple, fictive use of characterization appears in *Gammer Gurton's Needle* at about the same time as the insistently metaphysical characterization of *Respublica.*[41] In *Misogonus* (c. 1570) the anonymous playwright calls on both traditions of characterization within a single play: the central moral types are surrounded by amusing English character sketches (including a corrupt priest called Sir John, much in the style of Heywood's Syr Jhan).

A corollary to *Johan Johan*'s narrative premise is its structural tidiness in motivating the action in the characters and the characterizations in the action. In the abstract scenarios of the morality plays, motivation for the "action" is rarely grounded in the needs or wants of human characterizations; the action is more typically instigated from on high by the capricious hand of a god or a vice. For example, in *Wit and Science*, written by Heywood's colleague John Redford (c.1539), the hero's prescribed journey and tasks constitute a kind of diagram demonstrating the moral permutations that arise from the various configurations of the allegorical characters: Wit and Idleness, Wit without Confidence, Science advised by Experience, and so forth. There is no sense of a human, emotional logic driving these encounters. The plot is arranged to inform the metaphorical meanings of the characters, but it is entirely presentational. *Johan Johan* on the other hand is representational in that its illusion of human action requires a semblance of specific human motivation; therefore Johan Johan's suspicions, fear, jealousy, hunger and frustration are all written into the characterization. Emotional motivation in Heywood remains a lightweight, humorous affair, but a half-century later writers like Greene and Shakespeare were to make their characters' motivating passions a central concern of their comedies.

A third structural feature of *Johan Johan* which would gain prominence in later developments of Tudor comedy is the manipulation of the audience's reception of the

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41. Harbage dates both plays to 1553. Alfred Harbage, *Annals of English Drama 975-1700*, third edition, revised by S. Schoenbaum and Sylvia Stoler Wagonheim (London and New York, 1989).

characters by the opposition of static and dynamic characterizations. The contrasts between Johan Johan's private fantasies and his actual responses to his wife and the priest give an added dimension of dynamism to the character. Heywood opposes this developing interest in the character with the static, exaggerated values of the other two characters. In this way Heywood contrives that although Johan Johan is proved a fool and the butt of the farce's jokes, the audience's sympathies remain with him. We see the action from the husband's perspective. Structural contrasts between characters were to become increasingly sophisticated as comedies grew more complex and branched out into double- and triple-plot constructions. Selective use of character development and dynamism would give more emotional weight and sympathy to the romantic comedies of Greene and Shakespeare.

In utilising these principles of narrative illusion, motivation of character and action, and structural comparison and characterization, *Johan Johan* gives characterization an unusually central function in the dramatic composition. Interestingly, we can see these same principles developing to the same end in the new English comedies of the 1540s and 50s: *Jack Juggler, Thersites, Gammer Gurton's Needle*, and *Roister Doister.* Of course it would be rash to attribute these developments to the influence of Heywood's *Johan Johan.* These plays were based not on French farces but on the classical comedies of Plautus and Terence, which were widely taught to Tudor schoolboys. Yet it is interesting to see these classically-inspired dramatists focusing on characterization just as Heywood had done before them. In looking at the novel, character-centred structure of *Johan Johan* we may usefully regard it as a continental harbinger of the English comedy that was to come.

CHAPTER 3

VARIATIONS ON A CLASSICAL THEME: UDALL'S *ROISTER DOISTER*

One of Heywood's chief followers in the creation of secular English comedy was Nicholas Udall (1505-1556). Udall, like Heywood, presented a number of entertainments with boy players at court occasions from the 1530s to the 1550s. Udall, however, was primarily known as a scholar; he published several important translations of Latin works with special commendations from Queen Catherine Parr and the Privy Council, and he served as headmaster at Eton.[1] Udall's plays involve more of classical dramaturgy and academic humour than Heywood's interludes; nonetheless Udall builds on Heywood's sketches of contemporary English characters as the basis for his comic drama. *Thersites*, *Jack Juggler, Jacob and Esau* and *Respublica* have all been attributed (uncertainly) to Udall, but it is chiefly for *Roister Doister* that he is praised as "the father of English comedy".[2]

In any discussion of early Tudor comedy the name of *Roister Doister* is bound to appear. This five-act play by the scholar and schoolmaster Nicholas Udall is often referred to as "the first regular English comedy".[3] Considerable scholarship has addressed the question of when this famous "first" was actually written and performed;[4] the most convincing evidence points to a performance in the second half of 1552 at Windsor, where Udall had been appointed a canon.[5] Critical discussion also ranges over *Roister Doister*'s merits as a "regular comedy"; in particular the play's act and scene structure and its debts to Plautus and Terence have been thoroughly

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1. See the biography of Udall in William L. Edgerton, *Nicholas Udall*, Twayne's English Author Series, 30 (New York, 1965).
2. Ewald Flügel, in Charles Mills Gayley's *Representative English Comedies* (New York, 1930), Vol.I, p.98.
3. See, for example, T. W. Baldwin, *Shakspere's Five-Act Structure* (Urbana, 1947), p.375.
4. Earlier critics dated the play to Udall's tenure as headmaster at Eton, 1534-1541, among them J. Q. Adams, *Chief Pre-Shakespearean Dramas* (Boston, 1924), p.423; Flügel, pp.95-97; and M. C. Bradbrook, *The Growth and Structure of Elizabethan Comedy* (London, 1955), p.30. Later dates have been suggested by T. W. Baldwin and M. Channing Linthicum, "The Date to *Ralph Roister Doister*", *Philological Quarterly* 6 (1927) 379-395; William Peery, "The Prayer for the Queen in *Roister Doister*", *Studies in English* 27 (1948) 222-233; and Marie Axton, *Three Tudor Classical Interludes* (Cambridge, 1982), p.3, among others.
5. See William Edgerton, "The Date of *Roister Doister*", *Philological Quarterly* 44 (1965) 555-560.

analysed.[6] Yet, curiously, the issues of how Udall experimented with a new, English form of comedy in *Roister Doister* and what its legacy was to be in the development of later comedy have been left largely untouched. In the following pages I shall probe the structure of *Roister Doister* to examine Udall's comic priorities. Under closer scrutiny the plot of *Roister Doister* proves to be neither regular nor Terentian; and Udall's use of characterization, superficially so amusing, may shed light on the construction of this "first English comedy" and the shape of Tudor comedy to follow.

Roister Doister's debt to classical comedy is obvious. The Prologue to the play invokes classical comedy as a precedent for *Roister Doister*'s mirthful dramatic intentions:

> Knowing nothing more comendable for a man's recreation
> Than Mirth which is used in an honest fashion:
> For Myrth prolongeth lyfe, and causeth health.
> ...
> Which Mirth we intende to use, avoidyng all blame.
> The wyse poets long time heretofore,
> Under merrie Comedies secretes did declare,
> Wherein was contained very vertuous lore,
> With mysteries and forewarnings very rare.
> Suche to write neither Plautus nor Terence dyd spare,
> Whiche among the learned at this day beares the bell;
> These with such other therein dyd excell.
> (lines 6-21)[7]

The Prologue then uses the classical term to describe the current fare: "Our Comedie or Enterlude which we intende to play/ Is named 'Royster Doyster'". Udall, it seems clear, is consciously aspiring towards that mirthful, classical dramatic form, the comedy.[8]

Certainly Udall knew his Plautus and Terence very thoroughly. His famous schoolbook, *Floures for Latine Spekynge* (1534), was "selected and gathered oute of Terence" and supplemented with frequent quotations from Plautus, along with other Latin authors. In this influential book (reprinted five more times by 1581) Udall

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6. See Baldwin, *Five-Act Structure*, pp.397-398; C. F. Tucker Brooke, *The Tudor Drama* (Boston, 1911), pp.149-151; William Chislett, Jr., "The Sources of *Ralph Roister Doister*", *Modern Language Notes* 29 (1914) 166-167; James Hinton, "The Source of *Ralph Roister Doister*", *Modern Philology* 11 (1913) 273-278; D. L. Maulsby, "The Relation Between Udall's *Roister Doister* and the Comedies of Plautus and Terence", *Englische Studien* 38 (1907) 251-277; G. Scheurweghs, *Nicholas Udall's Roister Doister*, Materials for the Study of the Old English Drama, 16 (Louvain, 1939), pp.lx-lxxvii.

7. All line numbers refer to William Tydeman's edition of *Roister Doister* in *Four Tudor Comedies* (Harmondsworth, 1984), pp.95-205.

8. See J. Payne Collier, *The History of English Dramatic Poetry to the Time of Shakespeare* (London, 1879), Vol.II, p.356.

offered contemporary, colloquial English glosses for Terence's phrases in *Andria*, *Eunuchus*, and *Heautontimorumenos*, as well as explanations of specific grammatical or stylistic points. One may see a similar vernacular rendition of classical forms in the dramaturgy of *Roister Doister* which, as Tydeman says, is "again seeking to reproduce the spirit of the Latin rather than being content to imitate its mere letter".[9]

Roister Doister imitates several classical features in its structure. The play represents a completed human action: Roister Doister woos Christian Custance with increasingly troublesome attentions, calling her honour into question before her promised husband-to-be, Gawin Goodluck, until she and her maids vanquish the braggart in a mock battle and her true friend Tristram Trusty vouches for her good name and restores her to her husband. The events are treated as lifelike, human actions, not the abstract, allegorical encounters of the morality plays so popular in Udall's day.[10] As comic theory demands, the action of *Roister Doister* progresses from tribulation to a peaceful conclusion, and it comes close to maintaining the unities of place and time. All the action takes place outside the house of Christian Custance, but the action is spread over three consecutive days. According to Renaissance critics, the structural format of clearly demarcated acts and scenes was an important part of classical comedy,[11] and Udall seems to have carefully designed his acts as independent units.[12] (See Figure 1.) T. W. Baldwin offers a detailed structural analysis of *Roister Doister*'s action along the conventional classical lines: he finds that "Udall has normalized the Terentian structure," adapting the form of *Eunuchus* in particular, "and has made his act units clear-cut by giving each a definite contribution to make to the

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9. Tydeman, "Introduction", in *Four Tudor Comedies*, p.22. See also Baldwin, *Shakspere's Five-Act Structure*, p.393.

10. Udall may have written morality plays as well; the Marian morality *Respublica* has often been ascribed to him. *Respublica* employs the allegorical structure and characters typical of the English moralities: Dame Respublica is plagued with the bad government of Avarice, Adulation, Insolence and Oppression until Verity exposes them for what they are and Nemesis sentences them in a trial.

11. The Latin commentaries of Donatus and Servius cited Varro's authority to insist that Terentian comedy was devised in five acts, and Renaissance commentaries preserved their divisions. See, for example, Landino's treatise on Horace (1482), Guidonis Juvenalis on Terence (1492), and Badius on Terence (1502). Most Renaissance editions of Terence published after 1473 labelled the act divisions suggested by the early commentators; scene divisions were marked by headings in the text each time the grouping of characters on stage changed. See Baldwin, *Shakspere's Five-Act Structure*, pp.97-119.

12. Each act is initiated by the character (usually solus) who sets the act's events in motion: I.1 presents Matthew Merrygreek solus; II.1, Dobinet Doughtie solus; III.1 Matthew Merrygreek solus; IV.1 Sym Suresby solus; and V.1 Suresby and Gawin Goodluck.

	I.1	I.2	I.3	I.4	I.5	II.1	II.2	II.3	II.4	III.1	III.2	III.3	III.4	III.5	IV.1	IV.2	IV.3	IV.4	IV.5	IV.6	IV.7	IV.8	V.1	V.2	V.3	V.4	V.5	V.6
MERRYGREEK	X	X		X						X	X	X	X	X			X			X	X	X					X	X
R. DOISTER		X	X	X								X	X	X			X				X	X					X	X
MADGE			X	X	X		X											X				X						
TIBET			X					X	X		X							X				X						
ANNOT			X					X	X									X				X						
DOBINET				X		X	X	X													X	X						X
HARPAX				X																	X	X						X
CUSTANCE					X				X		X		X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
TRUEPENNY								X	X								X		X			X						
SCRIVENER														X														
SURESBY															X	X	X						X	X		X		
TRUSTY																			X	X	X	X				X	X	X
GAWYN																							X	X		X	X	X

Figure 1
Roister Doister
Scene-Character Grid

structure of the play, and by emphasizing that contribution in the opening and end scene of each act. In other words, Udall has emphasized the exposition of his structure."[13]

The memorable figure of the braggart soldier seems at first to suggest that Udall followed classical precedents in his presentation of character as well as action. As in the New Comedy of Menander, Plautus, and Terence, all the characters represent fictional private citizens (no gods, royalty, or historical personages). Structurally speaking all the characters are bound to the narrative: even the slightest of them has specific responsibilities to the causal completion of the action. Also, all of the characters retain their definite character values constantly over the course of the play: these are not complex portraits of developing personalities. (See Figure 2.) Like the characters of Plautus and Terence they remain static figures of recognizable types.[14]

Some of the character types of *Roister Doister* recall the stock figures of Plautus and Terence. Roister Doister himself recalls Pyrgopolynices of Plautus' *Miles Gloriosus* and Thraso of Terence's *Eunuchus*, and Matthew Merrygreek resembles the flattering parasites of these plays, Artotrogus and Gnatho.[15] The relationship of the braggart and the flatterer is quite similar in all three plays, though it has a different structural function in each case. As well, the Roman comedies are filled with servants, clever and otherwise, carrying the messages and running the errands that make up the intrigue. Udall uses servant characters in a similar way. The name of Roister Doister's servant Harpax stands out amidst the English names in the rest of the play; a character called Harpax is a soldier's servant in *Pseudolus*, and Udall seems to make a specific, though puzzling reference to Plautus with this minor character (perhaps as a joke for schoolboys who had recently studied that play).[16]

Despite these obvious similarities between the action and characters of *Roister Doister* and those of Plautine and Terentian comedy, on closer examination they prove

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13. Baldwin, pp.397-398.
14. Udall's contemporaries tended to regard Terence's characters as examples of qualities as much as representations of people. For example, a sixteenth-century textbook by Ioannes Susenbrotus includes the following phrases as samples of hyperbole: "more vainglorious than Terentian Thraso, more quarrelsome than Demea, more good-natured than Micio, more flattering than Gnatho, more self-confident than Phormio ..." Translated and quoted by Baldwin in *Five-Act Structure*, p.393.
15. Maulsby notes Roister Doister's links to the other boasting captains in classical comedy, p.272. E. P. Vandiver, Jr., compares and contrasts Matthew Merrygreek with the Roman parasites in "The Elizabethan Dramatic Parasite", *Studies in Philology* 32 (1935) 411-427, 412.
16. See David M. Bevington, *From Mankind to Marlowe* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1962), p.33.

CHARACTER	BOUND	FREE	STATIC	DYNAMIC
MERRYGREEK	B		S	
R. DOISTER	B		S	
MADGE	B		S	
TIBET	B		S	
ANNOT	B		S	
DOBINET	B		S	
HARPAX	B		S	
CUSTANCE	B		S	
TRUEPENNY	B		S	
SCRIVENER	B		S	
SURESBY	B		S	
TRUSTY	B		S	
GAWYN	B		S	

Figure 2
Roister Doister
Characters in Relation to Narrative

to be superficial. The action, while notably regularized along the Donatan five-act structure and obedient to narrative decorum, is nonetheless very different from the intrigues of Roman comedy. The simple story of Roister Doister's pursuit of Christian Custance lacks the deceits, subterfuges and complex machinations that make up the typical Plautine comedy. And though Udall culls the story of the braggart in love from Roman comedy, he handles it in his play structure very differently from either Plautus or Terence.

In Plautus' *Miles Gloriosus* Pyrgopolynices' feelings for the heroine are not an active feature of the play; since the soldier has control over the girl from the first scene he functions instead as the obstacle which Pleusicles must overcome in order to win his beloved. Likewise in the mock tryst with Acroteleutium the braggart's passions are aroused, but he initiates no action: the whole situation is thrust upon him by Palaestrio. In *Miles Gloriosus* the braggart is the object, not the agent of the distractions and deceits which make up the comic intrigue. But in *Roister Doister* the braggart and his parasite set in motion almost all of the play's action.

In Terence's *Eunuchus*, on the other hand, the braggart Thraso is an active character in the subplot. While the main story follows the courtesan Thais' attempts to protect the bereft Pamphila and restore her to her family, Thraso buzzes around the edges of the action, suspicious that Thais' affections are straying from him and keen to win her back through blandishment or force. *Eunuchus*, then, offers *Roister Doister* "a source for action, not, as in the lines borrowed from Plautus, merely for characterization".[17] Hinton spells out the parallels:

> In both plays a braggart attempts, during the absence of an accepted lover, to win the favor of a lady. In his efforts he relies completely on the counsel of his parasite; when that fails to bring success, he falls into a rage and attacks the lady's house, without bettering his position. When the accepted lover returns, the braggart is discomfited, and, realizing his failure, gives up, but is reconciled with his opponents through the machinations of his parasite, who thereby improves his own condition in the world.[18]

In *Eunuchus*, however, this action is a very minor part of the plot's complex net of relationships, disguises and recognitions; in *Roister Doister* this single story line

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17. Hinton, p.274.
18. Hinton, p.275.

sustains all five acts. Udall fills out the wooing action simply by adding more ridiculous demonstrations of the braggart's affections.

This brings us to the major discrepancy between the usual structure of classical comedy and that of *Roister Doister*: Plautus and Terence base their plays on action, on the complications of intrigue, whereas Udall diminishes the importance of sequential action and bases his play on character, namely that of Roister Doister. Udall abandons two of the major features of the classical intrigue plot, causality and suspense. In *Eunuchus*, for example, each new act of the braggart has a specific effect on the ensuing action. Thraso's gift to Thais brings the key figure of the orphan girl under her protection; Thais' attempts to reunite Pamphila and her brother incite the soldier's siege on her house; and the revelation that Pamphila is a free-born citizen halts Thraso's revenge. His continuing devotion to Thais allows the lovers to live happily together at the braggart's expense. But in *Roister Doister* each of the braggart's exploits takes the form of an independent episode: the message sent by Madge Mumblecrust (I.4 and 5), the ring delivered by Dobinet Doughtie (II.3), Roister Doister's despairing mock funeral (III.3), his serenade at Christian Custance's door (III.3), the famous love letter, both misread and corrected (III.4 and 5), and the declaration, siege and battle (IV.3, 7 and 8). All these scenes contribute to the story of Roister Doister's suit, but the causal links between the episodes are tenuous at best. Since all these sallies by Roister Doister are squelched indiscriminately by Christian Custance, the structural premium on causality is much less than in the Terentian intrigue. Any one of Roister Doister's romantic offerings could be omitted or replaced with some other tribute without substantially altering the simple story.

Not only does Udall's slight story forego the tight mechanical causality of Terentian comedy, it also lacks the suspense that multiple complications bring to an intrigue plot. Although the narrative follows Roister Doister's wooing, there is little doubt as to the outcome. It is patently clear that his ridiculous suit will fail to win Christian Custance. The Prologue states that the comedy "against the vayneglorious doth invey" (24); and in his first expository monologue, Matthew Merrygreek describes the braggart's hopeless love affairs as a regular occurrence:

If any woman smyle or cast hym an eye,
Up is he to the harde eares in love by and by,
And in all the hotte haste must she be hys wife,
Else farewell hys good days, and farewell his life!
Maister Raufe Rayster Doister is but dead and gon
Excepte she on hym take some compassion.
(I.1.67-72)[19]

Suspense as to the narrative outcome is sacrificed, but the characteristic behaviour of the braggart is established. When Roister Doister enters in I.2 he conforms exactly to Merrygreek's description:

ROISTER DOISTER.
Come, death, when thou wilt, I am weary of my life.
MATTHEW MERRYGREEK [to audience].
I tolde you, I, we should wowe another wife!
ROISTER DOISTER.
Why did God make me such a goodly person?
MATTHEW MERRYGREEK [to audience].
He is in by the weeke; we shall have sport anon.
(I.2.95-98)

With this line Udall announces the reigning principle of his dramatic structure: sport. The narrative sequence, predestined to fail in its love suit, is merely a frame for mirth at the expense of the vainglorious Ralph; mirth, that is, derived from a specific characterization.

This principle explains the arbitrariness of the episodes which make up the wooing story.[20] Each one repeats the same pattern of failure, but Udall amuses us with the manner in which each attempt arrives at its inevitable conclusion. Christian Custance refuses Madge's message and scolds Tibet for bringing her love tokens. She rejects Merrygreek's proxy suit and shoos off the serenading musicians. Matthew Merrygreek's mispointed rendition of the love letter is a fiasco, and Roister Doister's revenge on the Scrivener fizzles out too. The ultimate failure comes at the climax of the fourth act when Roister Doister and his servants are routed in "battle" by Christian Custance and her maids. With each rejection Roister Doister despairs anew and is ready to abandon his suit; only the intercessions of Matthew Merrygreek keep the action moving along.

Such repetitious action shows up the structural weakness of Udall's narrative: it seems to go nowhere until Act IV, when the entrance and observations of Sym Suresby

19. Dobinet Doughtie reiterates this pattern in his monologue in II.1.
20. Alan S. Downer remarks that love is "a perfunctory device to move the plot" in *Roister Doister*; *The British Drama* (New York, 1950), p.57.

begin a new and directed line of action. But in Acts I-III the narrative cannot sustain itself. Udall relies heavily on the mischief-making potential of Matthew Merrygreek's character to jump-start the action each time it stalls. These shortcomings suggest, however, that narrative is not Udall's primary concern. For all its much-advertised "regularity" of incident, *Roister Doister* depends much more on the fun of characterization than on intrigue.[21] If we look beyond the charm of the characterizations and examine their structural function in the play we shall see that Udall bases his comedy on the depiction of a personality, Ralph Roister Doister, and uses the other characters as foils and catalysts for the central figure. This experimental plot structure leads Udall into narrative difficulties, but they are offset by the humour and liveliness of his characterizations.

The title focuses attention at once on the main character, Ralph Roister Doister. Facts about his place in the world are few, but he appears to be a well-to-do citizen with a retinue of household servants, and he wishes to marry. Perhaps he has formerly held some sort of military position (like his classical ancestors), for he boasts "of his great actes in fighting and fray-making" (I.1.64), or perhaps this career is entirely imaginary. Primarily Roister Doister is characterized by his personality and his idiosyncratic behaviour. Central to these are his preposterous vanity and its utter dissociation from reality. Partly these qualities are expressed in Roister Doister's boasts of his success in love and war. Like Pyrgopolynices, Roister Doister complains,

> I am sorie God made me so comely doubtlesse,
> For that maketh me eche where so highly favoured,
> And all women on me so enamoured.
> (I.2.200-202)[22]

And like Thraso, or like Herod in the English mystery play tradition, Roister Doister rants about his insatiability in combat:

> Yes, for although he had as many lives
> As a thousande widowes, and a thousande wives,
> As a thousande lyons, and a thousande rattes,
> A thousande wolves, and a thousande cattes,
> A thousande bulles, and a thousande calves,

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21. Charles Mills Gayley remarks that the play "is a presentation of humours, -- corrective indeed, but farcical." *Representative English Comedies*, (New York, 1916), p.lxxviii.

22. The braggart of *Miles Gloriosus* wishes "only that I may never grow more handsome than I am; my good looks are my curse ..." E. F. Watling translates *The Swaggering Soldier* in *The Pot of Gold and Other Plays* (Harmondsworth, 1965), pp.147-212, p.196, l.1087.

And a thousande legions divided in halves,
He shall never scape death on my sworde's point,
Though I shoulde be torne therfore joynt by joynt.
(III.4.1223-1230)[23]

Yet when put to the test, Roister Doister's bravado evaporates into timidity, his boldness into cowardice, and his enthusiasm into depression. At each failure his dim wit is astounded that his glorious dreams have failed to materialize. Roister Doister's optimistic imagination causes him to be disappointed time after time, yet he never learns to resist Matthew Merrygreek's flattering visions. The essence of Roister Doister's characterization is emotional volatility. Even more characteristic than his brags are his flights between enthusiastic optimism and despair.[24]

ROISTER DOISTER.
Wough, she is gone forever; I shall hir no more see!
[ROISTER DOISTER bursts into tears.]
MATTHEW MERRYGREEK.
What, weepe? Fye, for shame! And blubber? For manhod's sake,
Never lette your foe so muche pleasure of you take!
Rather play the man's parte, and doe love refraine:
If she despise you, e'en despise ye hir againe!
ROISTER DOISTER.
By Gosse and for thy sake, I defye her indeede!
(III.4.1176-1181)

Roister Doister is characterized by textual description as well as by his own words and actions. Humorous descriptions of the braggart turn up in most of the scenes in the play. In this way the characterization has a dramatic function even when the character is not onstage or immediately engaged in the action at hand. The other characters delight in speaking of the ridiculous Roister; Merrygreek and Dobinet in particular carry on at great length describing his foibles (I.1 and II.1). The characterization serves, in a sense, as a running gag; and the plot relies on the character to evoke laughter consistently.

Udall's characterization, then, includes both Roister Doister's perception of himself and the other characters' opinions of his actions. In III.5 Roister Doister sighs over the obligations of gentility, "What is a gentleman but his word and promise?", but the Scrivener appraises him differently: "He disgraced himselfe; his loutishnesse is

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23. See *Eunuchus*, translated by Betty Radice in Terence's *Comedies* (Harmondsworth, 1976), pp.157-218, p.201, line 771. Daniel C. Boughner comments that Herod "is the 'prototype' of the braggart soldier of Latin comedy; and from his literary loins have issued Ralph Roister Doister, Bobadill, Bessus, many another boaster ..." *The Braggart in Renaissance Comedy* (Minneapolis, 1954), p.139.
24. Tydeman describes Roister Doister as "manic-depressive", p.25.

suche" (III.5.1241, 1250). In the fourth act Roister Doister expects to convince Christian Custance's supporters of his valour: "Yea, they shall know, and thou knowest, I have a stomacke" (IV.7.1654). But only moments before Christian Custance and Tristram Trusty had reached their own conclusions:

> **TRISTRAM TRUSTY.**
> There is no cause of feare, the least boy in the streete --
> **CHRISTIAN CUSTANCE.**
> Nay, the least girle I have will make him take to his feete!
> (IV.6.1641-1642)

This duality is akin to Heywood's use of private and public modes in the characterization of Johan Johan, another sort of laughable stock type, the cuckold. As in Heywood's farce, Udall keeps playing on these discrepancies between Roister Doister's imagined self-worth and enacted ridicule throughout the whole of the play. In both plays the central, foolish character is pushed into increasingly extreme situations. Johan Johan becomes more and more oppressed by the circumstances of Heywood's farce so that his weakness arouses more and more scorn as the play proceeds. Roister Doister, who constantly attempts to realize his fantasy life, fails again and again in increasingly pretentious scenarios of heroic love. Johan Johan is passive, Roister Doister active, but both plays laugh at the fools clinging to their self-defeating identities amidst the most trying conditions.[25]

Roister Doister builds up the humour of the central character not, as Heywood does, through a narrative sequence of indignities, but through a satirical progression. The stages of Roister Doister's courtship of Dame Custance reflect the braggart through a satirical mirror of chivalric conventions. The most important tradition invoked is that of the courtly lover. Dobinet Doughtie reports that Roister Doister essays all the conventional gestures of love:

> And nowe that my maister is new set on wowyng
> I trust that there shall none of us finde lacke of doyng:
> Two paire of shoes a day will nowe be too little
> To serve me, I must trotte to and fro so mickle!
> 'Go beare me thys token!' 'Carrie me this letter!'
> Nowe this is the best way, nowe that way is better;
> Up before day, sirs, I charge you, an houre or twaine,
> 'Trudge, do me thys message, and bring worde quicke againe',

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25. These comic characters anticipate the comedy of humours, developed by Jonson and Chapman. Northrop Frye comments, "The principle of the humor is the principle that unincremental repetition, the literary imitation of ritual bondage, is funny." *Anatomy of Criticism* (Princeton, 1957), p.168.

...
With every woman is he in some love's pang,
Then up to our lute at midnight, 'twangledome twang',
Then 'twang' with our sonets, and 'twang' with our dumps,
And 'heyhough' from our heart, as heavie as lead lumpes:
Then to out recorder with 'toodleloodle poope'
As the howlet out of an yvie bushe should hoope.
(II.1.585-604)

Roister Doister applies most of these measures in his wooing of Christian Custance: he sends her a love letter, various messages, a ring and "a token in a cloute", and gathers his servants to play and sing (rather raucously) on her doorstep.

Not only does Udall make use of these standard tributes, he satirizes the despair of the unrequited lovers of chivalric romance.[26] Roister Doister's first line places him squarely in the tradition of the melancholy lover: "Come, death, when thou wilt, I am weary of my life!" (I.2.95). Both Matthew Merrygreek and Dobinet Doughtie comment that Roister Doister is always falling into deep depressions over unattainable ladies, and in III.3 the braggart actually pretends to die, with the encouragement of Merrygreek's mock funeral rite. Plumstead comments,

> Roister pretends to die because he cannot win (or own) his lady (and her money). But he has none of the "desperaunce" of Troilus ... Roister's funeral is a mockery of true despair and humility -- a symbolic expression of his falseness. His repetition of the simple, stock phrase "Heigh-ho!" during the funeral service suggests that he feels nothing more. The live body pretending to be dead is the same commentary on his false sense of love as is Falstaff's apparent corpse on the battlefield a monument to his dishonor -- and could be played on the stage as effectively.[27]

The essential humility of the chivalric lover is replaced with Roister Doister's boundless conceit, and the courtly gentilesse of Chaucer's Troilus or Malory's Lancelot gives way to the braggart's insincerity and vulgarity. Under Merrygreek's examination the true reason for Roister Doister's attraction to Christian Custance is revealed:

MATTHEW MERRYGREEK.
Where be the bellowes that blewe this sodeine fire?
ROISTER DOISTER.
I heare she is worthe a thousande pounde and more...
(I.2.176-177)

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26. A. W. Plumstead suggests that Udall may parody Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* in particular; see "Satirical Parody in *Roister Doister*: A Reinterpretation", *Studies in Philology* 60 (1963) 141-154, 142.
27. Plumstead, pp.147-148.

With the mispointed love letter of III.4 Udall satirizes the courtly man of letters. Roister Doister conceives of himself as a man of wit and is absolutely confident that his letter will succeed:[28]

ROISTER DOISTER.
I wrote it ech whit.
MATTHEW MERRYGREEK.
Then nedes it no mending.
ROISTER DOISTER.
No, no!
MATTHEW MERRYGREEK.
No, I know your wit.
ROISTER DOISTER.
I warrant it wel.
...
MATTHEW MERRYGREEK.
But are you sure that your letter shall win her?
ROISTER DOISTER.
I wrote it myselfe.
(I.4.543-558)

As we discover, Roister Doister is lying: he hired a professional scrivener to write his letter for him. In any case, Matthew Merrygreek's mispunctuated reading of the letter is a farce. It includes the telling phrases "whereas I love you nothing at all,/ Regarding your substance chiefe of all", and "For your goodes and substance, I could bee content/ To take you as ye are", and "At no tyme in me shall ye muche gentlenesse finde" (III.4.1126-1127, 1140-1141, 1150). Not only do these sentiments turn the convention of the love letter on its head, but the accident of their existence unexpectedly highlights the braggart's true qualities.[29] The humour of this grammatical humiliation must have had particular appeal for Udall, himself a university graduate and a schoolmaster; the letter readings in III.4 and 5 demand a great deal of stage time for a single, intellectual joke. But in endowing the braggart with intellectual pretension Udall makes an influential addition to the traditional characterization. Neither Pyrgopoynices nor Thraso are at all academic, but among Roister Doister's Tudor descendants are Lyly's braggart Sir Tophas, who is "all *mars* and *ars*", and Shakespeare's Don Armado, who subscribes to the academe of Navarre.

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28. Nan Cooke Carpenter suggests that the episode of the letter poses Roister Doister in the guise of the medieval *clericus*. She sees Udall's play as "a dramatization of the old medieval debate: who is the ideal lover, the soldier or the scholar". Roister Doister parodies each type in turn. "*Ralph Roister Doister*: Miles versus Clericus", *Notes and Queries* 7 (1960) 168-170.
29. Plumstead comments, "The two-faced letter is a symbol of Roister's motleyness. The letter he sent is a fumbling copy of the original, just as Roister is a counterfeit of chivalry," p.149.

The notion of Roister Doister as a mock warrior also conforms to Udall's chivalric satire. In this aspect of the braggart's characterization two traditions, classical and English, are conflated into a single persona. The *miles gloriosus* was conceived first and foremost as a boasting soldier, and the hyperbolic account of Roister Doister's heroism in war has clear echoes of Plautus' Pyrgopolynices. Like him, Roister Doister triumphs over elephants:

> ... the last elephant that ever he sawe,
> As the beast passed by, he start out of a buske,
> And e'en with pure strength of arms pluckt out his great tuske!
> (I.4.484-486)[30]

Roister Doister's conquests are not limited to wild beasts; Matthew Merrygreek continues,

> He conquered in one day from Rome to Naples
> And wonne townes, Nourse, as fast as thou canst make apples!
> (I.4.499-500)[31]

These and other preposterous mock feats inspire Matthew Merrygreek to compare Roister Doister with famous heroes, just as Artotrogus does with Pyrgopolynices. Merrygreek flatters the braggart with his reputation amongst the local women:

> 'Who is this?' (sayth one) 'Sir Launcelot du Lake?'
> 'Who is this, greate Guy of Warwike?' sayth another;
> 'No' (say I) 'it is the thirteenth Hercules' brother':
> 'Who is this? noble Hector of Troy?' sayth the thirde;
> 'No, but of the same nest' (say I) 'it is a birde.'
> 'Who is this? greate Goliah, Sampson, or Colbrande?'
> 'No' (say I) 'but it is a Brute of the Alie lande.'
> 'Who is this? greate Alexander? or Charle le Maigne?'
> 'No, it is the tenth worthie,' say I to them agayne.
> (I.2.212-220)[32]

To the classical references of his Plautine source Udall has added the names of the famous chivalric heroes, Guy of Warwick and Lancelot du Lac. And to the classical feats of valour (as in the time when Roister Doister "overthrewe/ The fellow of the lion which Hercules slewe" (I.2.148)), the playwright adds nonsense deeds more in the style of the medieval tales of knights.

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30. In *Miles Gloriosus* Artotrogus says, "I was thinking about that elephant in India, and how you broke his ulna with a single blow of your fist." Watling, p.154.

31. Pyrgopolynices has vanquished "a hundred and fifty in Cilicia, a hundred in Scytholatronia, Sardinians thirty, Macedonians sixty -- killed that is -- in one day alone." Watling, p.154.

32. Compare with *Miles Gloriosus*: "...they pestered me with questions. 'Is he Achilles?' 'No, his brother,' I said." Watling, p.155. The references in Udall's passage to Hector , Hercules, and the nine worthies all recur in Shakespeare's characterization of the braggart Don Armado in *Love's Labour's Lost*. See Chapter 7.

This is hee understand,
That killed the blewe spider in Blanchepouderland.
(I.4.481-482)[33]

The hint of "blanche powder", a mixture of spices sprinkled on fruit, shows that Merrygreek is using heroic diction to boast that Roister Doister has killed a spider in the kitchen.[34] Nonetheless Madge is taken in by the chivalric style, and Merrygreek goes on to impress her with Roister Doister's conquests over "the King of Crickets" and Mumfision the gosling (I.4.491, 496). Such ludicrous reductions of the knight's deadly battles obviously burlesque the literary heroic tradition. The device seems to be a standard attribute of the characterizations of Tudor braggarts; in *Thersites* (sometimes attributed to Udall)[35] the title character has a combat with a snail, and Lyly's Sir Tophas of *Endimion* goes off to face his enemy, "the terrible Trowt".

All this mock-heroic characterization in Act I prefigures the mock battle of Act IV. The whole premise of the military action is hilariously un-courtly. Roister Doister, infuriated by Christian Custance's repeated rejection of his suit, forgets that a courtly lover submits entirely to his lady's will and resolves instead to take revenge on her cruelty.

ROISTER DOISTER.
Nay, dame, I will fire thee out of thy sty,
And destroy thee and all thine, and that by and by!
MATTHEW MERRYGREEK.
Nay, for the passion of God, sir, do not so!
ROISTER DOISTER.
Yes, except she will say 'yea' to that she sayd 'no'.
(IV.3.1489-1492)

Dobinet, Harpax, and "two drummes with their ensignes" assemble behind Roister Doister and Merrygreek in IV.7, but confusion reigns over the troops. Roister Doister and Merrygreek exchange blows before the enemy even appears, and their conflicting orders to the troops provide ample opportunity for slapstick collisions.

ROISTER DOISTER.
On therfore, marche forwarde! -- Soft, stay a while yet.

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33. Plumstead comments, "Merrygreek knows enough about chivalric romance to feign the dramatic moment when the dragon is slain in a desolate, gothic setting," p.144.
34. See Charles W. Whitworth's edition of *Roister Doister* in *Three Sixteenth-Century Comedies*, New Mermaids (London, 1984), p.122, f.64.
35. Marie Axton attributes *Thersites* to Udall in her edition of the play in *Three Tudor Classical Interludes* (Cambridge, 1982). See also A. R. Moon, "Was Nicholas Udall Author of *Thersites*?", *The Library*, Fourth Series 7 (1926) 184-193; and Edgerton, *Nicholas Udall*, p.24, 34.

MATTHEW MERRYGREEK.
On!
ROISTER DOISTER.
Tary!
MATTHEW MERRYGREEK.
Forth!
ROISTER DOISTER.
Back!
MATTHEW MERRYGREEK.
On!
ROISTER DOISTER.
Soft!

(IV.7.1685-1686)

The cowardly Roister Doister is nearly persuaded by Tristram Trusty to make a peaceful settlement, but Matthew Merrygreek takes matters into his own hands by firing his pop-gun and drawing forth the opposing troops. The ladies bear down on Roister Doister with their brooms and distaffs until he is thoroughly debased, moaning under the blows of Christian Custance and the double-crossing Merrygreek, "Out! Alas, I am slaine! Helpe!" (IV.8.1789). As soon as he can the braggart runs away: "Rather than to be slaine, I will flee!" (1808). With his ignominious exit Udall's satire of the heroic warrior is complete.

Udall's characterization of Roister Doister, then, contains a large element of satire. The chivalric conventions of love, letters, and arms are each superimposed onto the figure of the braggart for humorous effect. These satirical episodes have privileged places in the plot scheme -- the funeral, the letter incident, and the battle are all lengthy scenes -- yet they are largely self-contained and have little connection to a larger causal sequence. Udall replaces the intrigue action of classical comedy with these satirical scenes. They are unified chiefly by the characterization of Roister Doister, whose pretensions in romance, literature, and revenge are uniformly melodramatic and inept.

By using characterization as a unifying structural element, however, Udall sets himself a narrative problem. Roister Doister's satirical characterization demands that each episode concludes with his failure and his relapse into melancholy and inertia. But this format makes it difficult for Udall to show a natural progression from one incident to the next. Instead the playwright uses the character of Matthew Merrygreek to improvise the connections between the satirical scenes and move the story along.

Apart from his overwhelming desire for mischief and sport Matthew Merrygreek has little personality of his own. In his first soliloquy Merrygreek describes himself as a typical parasite character:

> My lyving lieth here and there, of God's grace,
> Sometime wyth this good man, sometyme in that place.
> (I.1.43-44)

But Udall soon replaces the parasite's motivation of hunger with Merrygreek's fun-loving high spirits.[36] About his relationship with Roister Doister Merrygreek confesses,

> But such sporte I have with him as I would not leese,
> Though I should be bounde to lyve with bread and cheese.
> (I.1.81-82)

Later he explains his complicity in the braggart's harassment of Christian Custance as a simple matter of "pastance" and "daliance":

> That if you coulde have take it up at the first bounde,
> We should therat such a sport and pastime have founde,
> That all the whole towne should have ben the merier!
> (IV.6.1617-1619)

In this capacity of mirthful mischief-maker Merrygreek is an innocent cousin of the morality Vice character.[37] His songs, fisticuffs and privileged access to the audience all recall the Vice, whose humorous antics made him a traditional favourite with audiences.[38] Most importantly, Udall assigns Merrygreek the Vice's function of manipulating other characters. In the typical morality psychomachia the Vice influences the Mankind figure towards sin and damnation with his deceit and guile. Udall takes the narrative function of the Vice's tricks and manipulation out of its moral context and places it in the more representational form of comedy. Instead of tempting Roister Doister towards evil, Matthew Merrygreek simply uses tricks and flattery to tease him into the humorous situations of Udall's satire.

The manipulative function of Merrygreek's characterization has another precedent in the Plautine character of the clever slave. This useful character is usually

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36. See John V. Curry, *Deception in Elizabethan Comedy* (Chicago, 1955), p.11.
37. Heywood's Mery Reporte in *The Play of the Weather* is another such character.
38. Like the Vice, Merrygreek is conscious of his manipulative powers and frequently announces his plans to the audience; see III.3.903-905, 910-911, for example. Robert Withington comments that the Vice's popularity ensured that "when Matthew Merrygreek, the fun-maker of *Roister Doister* appeared on the academic stage, he was hailed as an old friend." *Excursions in English Drama* (New York and London, 1937), p.60.

pressed into service by the lovelorn young hero to overcome the parental, financial or social obstacles which oppose his romantic inclinations. The servant's plan often sets up the complex deceits and subterfuges that sustain the typical Plautine plot, and the servant is often characterized as a high-spirited trickster. Palaestrio, the stage-managing servant of *Miles Gloriosus*, is a good example of the type, as are Davus of *Adelphoe* and the eponymous *Pseudolus*.

Matthew Merrygreek, who is neither a servant nor a parasite nor an embodiment of sin, nonetheless maintains the managerial, manipulative function of these earlier types.[39] Merrygreek pushes Roister Doister into new situations, styles and actions just as the fancy strikes him.

> I can with a worde make him fayne or loth,
> I can with as much make him pleased or wroth,
> I can when I will make him mery and glad,
> I can when me list make him sory and sad,
> I can set him in hope and eke in dispaire,
> I can make him speake rough, and make him speake faire.
> (I.1.85-90)

In fact, Merrygreek functions as a surrogate for the playwright: whenever Udall wants to move his braggart into a new satirical mode or situation, he foregoes the dramatization of coincidence or necessity and simply employs the persuasive powers of Matthew Merrygreek.[40] Merrygreek exhorts Roister Doister to action, and the gullible Ralph readily gives in to his flattering suggestions: "Well, as thou wilt have me, even so will I doe" (III.3.1013).

The consequence of Udall's scheme of characterization is that Roister Doister cannot sustain independent action without the support of Matthew Merrygreek. Roister Doister's motivation of love leads him only to a state of passive melancholy. Out of this condition his first and virtually sole action is to appeal for Merrygreek's help: "My whole hope and trust resteth onely in thee" (I.1.119). Roister Doister's dependence on Merrygreek shows itself structurally: in ten out of his eleven scenes Roister Doister is accompanied by Merrygreek. Only in I.3 does Udall present the braggart without his flatterer, and his personality is somewhat subdued; in all the subsequent scenes Roister

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39. Vandiver calls Merrygreek "a splendid example of the result of fusing native and classical material during the sixteenth century," p.412.
40. See Curry, p.10.

Doister is prompted and set off to his best comic advantage by the ancillary figure of Merrygreek.

As a kind of counterpoint to the dominant characterization of Roister Doister Udall supplies the minor characterizations of the servants. Although the servants in the households of Roister Doister and Christian Custance have specific tasks to fulfil in the narrative sequence, their errands and duties would not require any particular personalities. Nonetheless, Udall sketches the servants with a lively, attentive interest, and one senses the generosity of the playwright in giving each of his young actors a specific human concern to play. Dobinet Doughtie's tired feet, Tom Truepenny's grievance at being blamed for everything, Madge Mumblecrust's eagerness for a kiss from a gentleman, and Tibet Talkapace's dreams of beautiful clothes -- these details of characterization create the much-praised illusion of real people. For example, Flügel calls them "men and women of flesh and blood, interesting and amusing living beings".[41] As well, these minor character sketches keep up a lively, engaging stage picture during the rather mechanical action of message delivery in the first two acts; the activity seems much more interesting and important when seen through the eyes of the servants.

Udall's treatment of the servant characters has structural parallels with the central characterizations of Roister Doister and Matthew Merrygreek. In Act II Dobinet Doughtie functions in much the same capacity as Merrygreek does in the rest of the play. Although he can see the foolishness of Roister Doister's love suit, he helps it along and amuses himself by manipulating the other servants in the process. He beguiles Truepenny, Tibet and Annot in Act II by joining in their song of camaraderie and then abandons them to their mistress' displeasure. Yet there is no malice attributed to Dobinet Doughtie's deceit; his tricks, like Merrygreek's, are presented as harmless sport.

Christian Custance's servants, then, are placed in the same gullible relation to Dobinet Doughtie as Roister Doister is to Matthew Merrygreek. This structural

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41. Flügel, p.103. John B. Moore praises the servants as "the most authentic figures" and adds, "A powerful injection of characters from contemporary life -- low life, too -- is the most distinctive point to observe about *Ralph Roister Doister.*" *The Comic and the Realistic in English Drama* (Chicago, 1925), pp.120-121. See also Arnold Wynne, *The Growth of English Drama* (Oxford, 1914), p.89.

analogy is reinforced by Udall's repeated contrasts of characters' expectations of the future and the actual outcomes. Like Roister Doister, the servants are easily swept into high hopes for the future. Examples range from predictions of the immediate future, as in Madge's hopes of "good ale and white bread" (I.3.283) and Tibet's expectations of her mistress' thanks (II.3.741), to daydreams of the distant future, as in Tibet's vision of herself as a well-dressed lady (II.3.689) and her fantasy of revenge on Dobinet (III.2.805). The daydreams have no importance to the action although they may motivate certain incidents; more importantly they support the illusion of an individual living through the dramatic circumstances with hopes and dreams about his or her life. Such daydreams are eclipsed by Roister Doister's grandiose visions of his future, as prompted by Merrygreek -- among them his romantic death (III.3), his ferocious revenge on the Scrivener (III.4), his glorious triumph on the battlefield (IV.3 and 7), and his terrifying reputation (V.6). Roister Doister's daydreams take the character past an illusion of realism; he is larger than life, and the scale of the other characters' expectations emphasizes his comic disproportion.

Roister Doister is thus structurally compared with Annot, Tibet, Madge and Truepenny. All five are characterized as childishly hopeful, gullible, and unrealistic; all are gulled by the tricksters, Merrygreek and Dobinet; all five look to Christian Custance for approval but have their hopes brought to earth by her chiding voice of authority. Roister Doister's fantasies of the future are obviously far more pretentious than those of the servants, and his disappointments are therefore more spectacular, but by the corresponding characterizations of the servants Udall humanizes Roister. His impulses are similar to those of other people in the play world (who, after all, are not egged on by a Merrygreek). In this way Roister Doister is less of a monstrosity than Pyrgopolynices or Thraso.[42] The Roman braggarts are isolated in their plays as grotesques. Perhaps it is for didactic purposes that Udall implies a structural link between the folly of Roister Doister and that of the smaller, more ordinary characters.

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42. Clarence Griffin Child remarks that Roister Doister "is to a very great degree more realistic and probable without any loss of humorous effectiveness, and therefore artistically superior" to the classical braggarts. *Ralph Roister Doister* (London, 1913), pp.49-50.

The minor characterizations of the servants support the main premise of Roister Doister's character, especially in the first two acts, but like the characterization of the braggart these character sketches are limited in terms of narrative potential. It seems that in his character-based plot Udall has created something of a structural problem for himself. Roister Doister's characterization is the dramatic heart of the play, and the comic essence of the character lies in the discrepancy between his grandiose delusions and his idiotic behaviour: the joke is that Roister Doister always fails, but never learns. Yet this joke requires repetitive action -- failure at love, failure at letters, failure at arms -- and repetition is hard to sustain within the premise of sequential action. Udall disperses some of the action among the servant characters, and he employs the character of Matthew Merrygreek to keep the scenes moving along, but even so the predictability of Roister Doister's responses robs the action of any suspense or climax. In order to force his satirical farce into these dramatic shapes Udall has to shift his structural focus. Whereas Acts I-III trace the doings of Roister Doister, Acts IV and V concentrate on their effect on the other major character, Christian Custance.

Christian Custance is introduced very early in the play as the source of Roister Doister's passion, and in the first three acts she functions primarily as the object of his actions rather than as an agent in her own right. In Acts I and II Dame Custance is a rather distant quasi-parental figure who appears only in the last scene of each act to admonish her servants for participating in Roister Doister's wooing. In fact she tries to remove herself, and her servants, from the comic action on the street:

> Good wenches would not so rampe abroad ydelly,
> But keepe within doores, and plie their worke earnestly.
> (II.4.775-776)

Christian Custance is the adult voice of sobriety and responsibility that tempers the childish giddiness of Roister Doister, Merrygreek and the servants.[43] Yet compared with these exuberant characterizations Udall's treatment of Dame Custance in the first half of the play seems indifferent and rather colourless.

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43. David Bevington suggests that Udall implies a contrast between the household management of Christian Custance and Roister Doister, which he reads as a metaphor for government. He writes, "Christian Custance's victory over Roister Doister is ... an assertion of the feminine values of concord, domesticity, and forbearance." *Tudor Drama and Politics* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1968), pp.123-124.

But when in Act IV Udall begins to push the play back into the narrative shapes expected of comedy, crisis, suspense, and resolution, the characterization of Christian Custance suddenly becomes a major concern of the plot. In Acts I-III Dame Custance was characterized as an independent, self-sufficient figure. But in Acts IV and V Christian Custance is redefined in terms of her relationship with her fiancé, Gawyn Goodluck, and the fragility of that association changes her characterization into one of vulnerability and dependence on male authority. The function of the character changes from adversary to victim. Following the scrutiny of Sym Suresby Christian Custance loses confidence in her position. Although she angrily routs Roister Doister on the mock battlefield, she is unable to defend herself before her fiancé.

CHRISTIAN CUSTANCE.
Truly, most deare spouse, nought was done but for pastance.
GAWYN GOODLUCK.
But such kynde of sporting is homely daliance.
CHRISTIAN CUSTANCE.
If ye knewe the truthe, ye would take all in good parte.
GAWYN GOODLUCK.
By your leave, I am not halfe well skilled in that arte.
CHRISTIAN CUSTANCE.
It was none but Roister Doister, that foolishe mome.
GAWYN GOODLUCK.
Yea, Custance; better (they say) a badde scuse than none.
(V.2.1869-1874)

Act V shows the character curiously devoid of personal power. Her servants do not appear, thus curtailing the sense of her authority. Since her husband-to-be will not trust her, Christian Custance has no one to turn to but God. Her morality-style name suggests that her faith has ever been constant, and she prays fervently, "Ah, Lorde, helpe poore widowes, destitute of comfort!" (1868). Udall capitalizes on this tragic mood in V.3, a lonely soliloquy in which Christian Custance prays for deliverance.

Howe innocent stande I in this, for deede or thought,
And yet see what mistrust towardes me it hath wrought!
(V.3.1887-1888)

She consoles herself with the thought of famous women from the Bible whose strength and help came from the Lord when they were powerless to act:

Thou didst helpe the advoutresse that she might be amended,
Much more [them] helpe, Lorde, that never yll intended!
Thou didst helpe Susanna, wrongfully accused,
And no lesse dost thou see, Lorde, how I am now abused;
Thou didst helpe Hester, when she should have died;

Helpe also, good Lorde, that my truth may be tried!
(V.3.1891-1896)

With these references Udall raises his character to the elevated stature of the Biblical heroines; he also invokes a dramatic tradition of the suffering and vindication of virtuous women. The trials of Susanna, Esther and Mary Magdalene were popular subjects in the continental Latin drama and on the Tudor stage.[44] Their secular counterpart was Patient Griselda, the long-suffering faithful wife of medieval tradition, whose tribulations continued on the Tudor stage in several plays.[45] In his treatment of Christian Custance, then, Udall imports a ready-made dramatic premise with built-in suspense and climax and a satisfying resolution. The fact that these developments have little to do with the earlier characterization of Dame Custance, Roister Doister, or the farcical action of the rest of the play seems unimportant to the playwright as he skilfully sketches the traditional portrait of a wronged heroine.[46]

In short, Udall's "development" of the character of Christian Custance is primarily a narrative device to bring the play to its climax. Udall shows no particular interest in the object of Roister Doister's passion in Acts I and II; the braggart's parodic form of love is funny enough in itself. But since Roister Doister's failure in love is predestined from Act I, Udall must find some other tack with which to bring the play to crisis, and he focuses on Christian Custance. The popular medieval tale of the trials of a virtuous woman was readily available in Tudor literature and drama; Udall seems to

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44. Latin plays include Sixt Birck's extremely popular *Susanna* (published Basel, 1537), which Udall may well have known; Edgerton suggests that Birck's *Ezechias* may have been the source for Udall's lost play of that name (*Nicholas Udall*, p.27). Other continental plays were Placentius' *Susanna* (1536); Frischlin's *Susanna* (1578); Schonaeus' *Susanna* (1592); and Petrus Philicinus' *Magdalena Evangelica* (1546), in which the heroine, like Christian Custance, compares herself to Esther and Susanna. See Marvin T. Herrick, *Tragicomedy* (Urbana, 1962), pp.46-49, 59. Tudor plays include Play 24 of the N-Town Mystery Cycle, which dramatizes the woman taken in adultery (John vii:3-11), a possible "advoutress"; John Burgess' lost *Mary Magdalene*, played at Oxford in 1507; Lewis Wager's *The Life and Repentance of Mary Magdalene* (c.1558); Thomas Garter's *The Most Virtuous and Godly Susanna* (c.1569); the anonymous interlude, *Godly Queen Hester* (c.1527). (All dates here follow the third edition of Alfred Harbage's *Annals of English Drama 975-1700*, revised by S. Schoenbaum and Sylvia Stoler Wagonheim (London and New York, 1989).) See Tydeman, p.397.

45. The story of Patient Griselda was passed from Boccaccio on to dramatic renditions in France, Germany, Italy, and the Low Countries in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. In Tudor England Udall's contemporary Radcliffe wrote a Griselda play around 1546, now lost; John Phillip published his *Patient and Meek Grissil* (c.1559); and Dekker and Chettle reworked the tale again in *Patient Grissell* (1600). See Leo Salingar's discussion of medieval stage heroines in *Shakespeare and the Traditions of Comedy* (Cambridge, 1974), pp.39-59; also C. R. Baskervill, "Some Evidence for Early Romantic Plays in England", *Modern Philology* 14 (1916) 487-488. Another English source for Christian Custance is Chaucer's Custance, the virtuous heroine of the Man of Law's Tale.

46. Wynne is impressed by the "fullness of portraiture" in Udall's treatment of Dame Custance's emotions in *The Growth of English Drama*, p.89.

have lifted its moral, emotional centre for the climax of his otherwise farcical comedy.[47] He stresses the seriousness of Christian Custance's feelings within the comic misunderstanding, and gives her moral stature through the identifications with Biblical figures. Christian Custance's emotional fluctuation in Acts IV and V is, in a sense, a serious reflection of Roister Doister's careering passions in Acts I-III, yet the dramaturgical functions of the characterizations are fundamentally different. While Roister Doister's volatile temperament is one of the keys to the play's humour, Christian Custance's emotions are invoked late in the play to support a rather contrived climax.

In the last scenes of the play, Udall ties the dramatic action of Christian Custance to the earlier farcical action of Roister Doister with the common theme of tolerance. Tristram Trusty convinces the suspicious Gawyn Goodluck and Sym Suresby to relax their insistence on codified virtue and adopt a more humorous view of Christian Custance's involvement with Roister Doister. Gawyn duly reinstates his patient bride:

> Sweete Custance, neither heart can thinke nor tongue tell,
> How much I joy in your constant fidelitie!
> Come nowe, kisse me, the pearle of perfect honestie!
> (V.4.1910-1912)

Christian Custance, the paragon of virtue, magnanimously forgives him. She is more reluctant to accept the troublesome friendship of Roister Doister but eventually she is persuaded to relent and welcome him, if only for the sake of sport.

> **CHRISTIAN CUSTANCE.**
> Fye, I can scarce abide ye shoulde his name recite.
> **MATTHEW MERRYGREEK.**
> Ye must take him to favour, and pardon all past;
> He heareth of your returne, and is full yll agast.
> **GAWYN GOODLUCK.**
> I am ryght well content he have with us some chere.
> **CHRISTIAN CUSTANCE.**
> Fye upon him, beast! Then wyll not I be there!
> **GAWYN GOODLUCK.**
> Why, Custance, do ye hate hym more than ye love me?
> **CHRISTIAN CUSTANCE.**
> But for your mynde, sir, where he were would not I be!
> **TRISTRAM TRUSTY.**
> He woulde make us al laugh!
> **MATTHEW MERRYGREEK.**
> Ye nere had better sport.

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47. Robert Greene imposes similar arbitrary tests on his virtuous heroine to fill out the love story in *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*. See Chapter 6.

GAWYN GOODLUCK.
I pray you, sweete Custance, let him to us resort.
CHRISTIAN CUSTANCE.
To your will I assent.
(V.5.1940-49)

Roister Doister is included in the final banquet, and his delusions are left intact, for, as Merrygreek says, "Why, such a foole it is,/ As no man for good pastime would forgoe or misse" (V.5.1940-1950). In short the priggish, Puritanical attitude towards virtue gives way before a more tolerant, realistic code of conduct which embraces innocent mirth and sport.[48]

The comedy ends on the same note as it began,

Knowing nothing more comendable for a man's recreation
Than mirth which is used in an honest fashion.
(Prologue, 6-7)

Mirth is Udall's moral, and it is also his structural principle. Udall's particular genius is that he can find mirth in individual personalities, not only in the traditional figure of the braggart, but in the lesser figures of servants and citizens. Characterization becomes a dominant element in the structure of *Roister Doister*, much more so than in the Roman comedies Udall drew from. In the first place Udall contrives a series of satirical incidents to show off the ludicrous vanity and histrionic emotions of his braggart hero; then he conceals the sparseness of his causal sequence by sketching its effects on the lively, gullible batch of servants; and finally, when the requirements of a comic climax intrude into these *lazzi*, Udall develops a dramatic characterization of a wronged heroine to permit her vindication as the resolution of the comedy. The play is remarkably free from the narrative claims of coincidence, disguise, and complication; for the most part Udall creates his comic effects through characterization.[49]

Despite the lack of definite evidence about the circumstances of *Roister Doister*'s composition and first performance, there is no doubt that the play was well known and popular during the sixteenth century.[50] The device of the ambiguously punctuated letter appeared in grammatical textbooks, and the word "roister" became common in Elizabethan vocabulary. Another swaggering character was called Ralph

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48. See Bevington, *Tudor Drama and Politics*, p.102.
49. Wynne comments that the play "bases its comedy on character, educing the amusing scenes from the clash of vanity, constancy and mischief," p.93.
50. See Collier, Vol.II, p.355.

Roister in Ulpian Fulwell's *Like Will to Like* (c.1576). If Udall's character became a standard theatrical figure, then it seems possible that Udall's use of characterization was likewise influential. His interest in the individuality of characters was to become a prevalent feature in the comedy of the second half of the century. His dramatic focus on an extreme, laughable personality anticipates the structure of Jonson's comedies of humours (though where Udall encourages bemused tolerance Jonson preaches social reform), and his secondary interest in the emotional response of his heroine to the comic situation suggests one of the premises of later romantic comedy and tragicomedy. Udall's affectionate, detailed characterization of the minor roles was also influential; his humorous sketch of the servants promoted Heywood's interest in the details and personalities of everyday life within a more complex dramatic structure. While Udall binds these minor characterizations to his main story in *Roister Doister*, in later comedies we shall see minor characterizations being introduced independently of the primary narrative and taking on their own subplot. The changing function of characterization in comic structure can be seen clearly in our next play, *Misogonus*.

CHAPTER 4

MISOGONUS AND THE GROWING IMPORTANCE OF FREE CHARACTERS

One of *Roister Doister*'s first successors in the developing genre of English comedy was *Misogonus*, a play probably performed in Cambridge, usually dated between 1560 and 1577.[1] Hales calls it "the second English Comedy" and structurally it bears considerable resemblance to Udall's play.[2] Both plays present simple stories with predestined outcomes; and in both plays the primary dramatic interest lies in character and situation rather than in narrative intrigue. Yet both plays respond to the Renaissance notion of a "comedy", as exemplified by the classical model of the plays of Terence and Plautus and the criticism of Horace and Donatus. As we have seen, Udall seems to draw directly from classical scripts, using *Miles Gloriosus* and *Eunuchus* in particular as points of departure for his unquestionably original comedy. The author of *Misogonus*, however, although familiar with Terence and Plautus, appears to base his comedy not on specific classical texts but on a Renaissance, humanist response to those texts:[3] the impulse to create a new comedy in accord with Christian morality, a "Christian Terence".

The humanist approach to education is the source for this movement, which extended across Northern Europe. Fluency in spoken Latin was an essential feature of a Renaissance education, and school productions of Latin plays became a widespread

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1. Considerable controversy surrounds the date and authorship of *Misogonus*, which was first published from the only extant manuscript in 1898. There are summaries of the main arguments in Lester E. Barber's edition of *Misogonus* (New York and London, 1979), pp.1-27; and John S. Farmer's Notes to his edition of *Misogonus* in *Six Anonymous Plays*, Second Series, Early English Dramatists (London, 1906; reprinted in facsimile Guildford, 1966), pp.406-409. See also T. W. Baldwin, *Shakspere's Five-Act Structure* (Urbana, 1947), pp.428-433; David M. Bevington, "*Misogonus* and Laurence Bariwna", *English Language Notes* 2 (1964) 9-10; Samuel A. Tannenbaum, "The Author of *Misogonus*" in *Shaksperian Scraps and Other Elizabethan Fragments* (New York, 1933), pp.129-141; G. L. Kittredge, "The *Misogonus* and Laurence Johnson", *The Journal of Germanic Philology* 3 (1901) 335-341; G. C. Moore Smith, "Misogonus", *The Times Literary Supplement*, 10 July 1930, p.576.

2. John W. Hales, "The Date of 'The First English Comedy'", *Englische Studien* 18 (1893) 408-421, 419. Hales assumes that *Misogonus* precedes *Gammer Gurton's Needle*.

3. F. S. Boas remarks that it was "less in the classical than in the neo-classical drama that the Early Tudor writers of comedy found their chief stimulus." Boas, "Early English Comedy", in *The Cambridge History of English Literature*, edited by A. W. Ward and A. R. Waller (Cambridge, 1932), Vol.V, Part 1, p.107.

pedagogical tool.[4] The comedies of Plautus and especially Terence were standard classroom reading. Some humanist educators desired a Christian alternative to these pagan plays, which all too often described the triumph of lechery, deception, and filial disrespect. The humanist scholars sought to create original comedies imitating the style and structure of Terence while teaching a Biblical lesson or a moral story in which Christian virtue conquers vice. These didactic comedies were aimed at schoolboy players and audiences, and boys, sons and students frequently appear as major characters.[5]

The "Christian Terence" movement seems to have been strongest in Germany and the Low Countries.[6] Herrick comments, "The religious ferment attending the Protestant Reformation, which rescued the Bible from the neglect that often accompanied the early enthusiasm for classical letters, was an important factor in the development of these academic plays."[7] Original comedies by the German scholar Reuchlin at the end of the fifteenth century were influential examples of the form, and the discovery and publication in 1501 of six moral comedies in imitation of Terence by

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4. For example, the schoolmaster Macropedius wrote in the Prologue to his comedy, *Andrisca*, of all the benefits which comedy could bring to the schoolboy:

Inter tot interque; adeò discrepantia
Scholaria exercitia, nullum (ut arbitror)
Maioribus mihi prosequendum laudibus,
Quàm scaenicus ludus (modò absit foeditas)
Actusque; comicus. Alij versus canant,
Alij legant scribántue crebrò epistolas,
Alij aliud exercitium honestum tractitent,
Comoedia una facile praestat omnibus -
Si carmen arridet, ea uersu labitur -
Si prosa, totius ita Iambus carminis
Attemperatur, ut à soluta uix queas
Oratione metro ligatam cernere.
Haec schemata grammatico troposque; suggerit,
Haec rhetori administrat arma affectuum,
Haec differenti offert locos dialectico.
Quid tibi parit maiorem ad homines gratiam?

Georgii Macropedii, *Andrisca* (Coloniae, 1540), p.A3, lines 8-23.

5. Charles E. Herford, *Studies in the Literary Relations of England and Germany in the Sixteenth Century* (London, 1886, reprinted 1966), p.71.

6. In England George Whetstone complained, "the *Germaine* is too holye, for he presentes on euerye common stage what Preachers should pronounce in Pulpets." The Dedication to *Promos and Cassandra* (1578), reprinted in G. Gregory Smith, editor, *Elizabethan Critical Essays* (London, 1904, reprinted 1971), Vol.I, p.59.

7. Marvin T. Herrick, *Tragicomedy* (Urbana, 1962), p.20.

the tenth-century German nun, Hrotsvitha, seems to have inspired the writers further.[8] As the sixteenth century unfolded a great many humanist scholars turned their hands to writing educational dramas or *comediae sacrae*.

Many of the plays dramatize Biblical stories. Some produced representations of Christ's passion (a dramatic subject already familiar in the form of the mystery plays) in a Latin which attempted to match classical standards of style.[9] Others related Old Testament and Apocryphal stories: Joseph and his brothers, Susanna and the Elders, Tobias, Judith and Holofernes, Abraham and Isaac, Job, and Esther appear frequently in the sixteenth-century Latin drama.[10] The parables also provided material for Christian comedies, and one of the most popular subjects was the story of the Prodigal Son, as related in Luke 15:11-32.

The parable of the prodigal son had inspired numerous representations and retellings in medieval art and literature, and dramatizations of the tale can be traced from all over Europe.[11] In France there was the *Courtois D'Arras* in the late twelfth or early thirteenth century, and *L'Enfant Prodigue* in the fifteenth century.[12] The French scholar Ravisius Textor wrote two Latin dialogues on the theme of the prodigal son: his moral dialogue, *De Filio Prodigo*, and his farcical *Juvenis, Pater et Uxor* which was an influential source for successive dramatists.[13] In Italy the story of the prodigal son appears in three fifteenth-century Florentine *sacre rappresentazioni*,

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8. See Edwin H. Zeydel, "The Reception of Hroswitha by the German Humanists after 1493", *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 44 (1945) 239-249. See also Herrick, pp.17-18, and Herford, pp.79-80.

9. Some examples are Stoa's *Theoandrathanatos* (1508), Bartholomaeus' *Christus Xilonicus* (1529), Grimald's *Christus Redivivus* (1543), Philicinus' *Magdalena Evangelica* (1546), and Foxe's *Christus Triumphans* (1551). See Herrick, p.55.

10. See Herrick, pp.31-37, 46-55; also Herford, p.85.

11. Konrad Renger discusses the iconography of the prodigal son and reproduces many fine examples of Dutch prints and paintings of the subject in *Lockere Gesellschaft: Zur Ikonographie des Verlorenen Sohnes und von Wirtshausszenen in der niederlandischen Malerei* (Berlin, 1970), pp.23-70, plates 3-43. Alan R. Young compares the iconographies of art and drama in *The English Prodigal Son Plays*, Salzburg Studies in English Literature: Jacobean Drama Studies, 89 (Salzburg, 1979), p.27-52. See the very useful appendix of W. E. D. Atkinson's edition of *Acolastus* for a comparison of the dramatic treatments of the Prodigal son story before Gnapheus. *Acolastus*, University of Western Ontario Studies in the Humanities 3 (London, Ontario, 1964), pp.205-227.

12. *Courtois D'Arras: Jeu du XIII^e Siècle*, edited by Edmond Faral, Les Classiques Français du Moyen Age (Paris, 1911). The *Moralité de L'Enfant Prodigue* survives only in a summary by François Parfaict in *Histoire du Théatre Français* (Paris, 1745), Vol.III, pp.139-144.

13. The *Comoediae Personae Svnt, Ivvenis, Pater, Vxor* appears in Textor's *Dialogi Aliqvot festiuissimi, studiosae iuuentuti cum primis utiles* (reprinted London, 1581). See the discussions of J. Vodoz in *Le Théâtre Latin de Ravisius Textor, 1470-1524* (Winterthour, 1898, reprinted Geneva, 1970), pp.91-95, 121-125.

including Castellano Castellani's *Rappresentazione del Figliuol Prodigo.*[14] In the sixteenth century the tale continued to appear in vernacular drama; the German play by Burkard Waldis, *Der Parabell vom verlornen Sohn* (1527), has "no trace of classical influence",[15] and within the English morality tradition of the sixteenth century are variations on the prodigal theme in *Youth* (c.1513), the fragmentary *Prodigal Son* (c.1530) based on Textor, Wever's *Lusty Juventus* (c.1550), *Nice Wanton* (c.1550), and Ingelend's *Disobedient Child* (c.1560).[16] The various European treatments of the prodigal son story expand considerably upon the parable as it appears in Luke. Nonetheless, certain elements recur in the artistic representations of the Middle Ages and early Renaissance. W. E. D. Atkinson summarizes them in the following précis:

> A youth, at the instigation of a wicked friend, demands his patrimony, which his father reluctantly grants him. He goes abroad, and there falls victim to several rogues. They win his patronage by flattery and provide him with the materials of debauchery, including a courtesan, of whom he becomes enamoured; then rob him of all his money at dice. With his wealth the Prodigal also loses his new friends. The courtesan joins the others in driving him out naked into the world. He takes service as a swineherd and bitterly contrasts his present condition with his former prosperity. Meanwhile the father grieves for his son, expresses a longing to see him again, and is assured that all will somehow be well. As in the parable, the Prodigal at length decides to seek his father's forgiveness, is rapturously received and honoured with a feast; his elder brother complains and is rebuked by the father for his want of charity.[17]

Clearly the prodigal son story, already very popular in the native drama, was a prime choice for the schoolmaster dramatists. Herford comments,

> No other [subject] so effectively combined qualities which appealed to the Humanist with those which had an attraction for the Reformer. The problem of providing a "Christian Terence" was materially lightened by the example of a plot in which a genuine Terentian intrigue led up in the happiest way to a Christian repentance and reconciliation. And, on the other hand, the nature of

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14. Castellani's play is reprinted in Alessandro d'Ancona's collection of *Sacre Rappresentazioni dei Secoli XIV, XV e XVI* (Firenze, 1872), Vol.I, pp.357-389; d'Ancona mentions the other two plays.
15. Herford, p.153. Waldis' play appears as *Der verlorene Sohn, ein Fastnachtspiel*, edited by Gustav Milchsack, Neudruke Deutscher Litteraturwerke des XVI. und XVII. Jahrhunderts, 30 (Halle, 1881).
16. *Youth*, in *Tudor Interludes*, edited by Peter Happé (Harmondsworth, 1972), pp.113-138. *The Prodigal Son: A Fragment of an Interlude Printed c.1530,* in the Malone Society's *Collections*, Part 1 (Oxford, 1907), pp.27-30. Richard Wever's *Lusty Juventus*, in *The Dramatic Writings of Richard Wever and Thomas Ingelend*, edited by John S. Farmer, Early English Dramatists (London, 1905), pp.1-42. *Nice Wanton*, in *The Tudor Interludes Nice Wanton and Impatient Poverty*, edited by Leonard Tennenhouse, The Renaissance Imagination, Vol.10 (New York and London, 1984), pp.64-125. Thomas Ingelend, *The Disobedient Child*, edited by John S. Farmer, The Tudor Facsimile Texts (London and Edinburgh, 1908, reprinted New York, 1970). In Scotland a *Comedy of the Forlorn Son* was presented in St Andrews in 1574, but it is impossible to tell what form the play took. See Anna Jean Mill, *Mediaeval Plays in Scotland* (Edinburgh and London, 1927), pp.93-94.
17. Atkinson, p.6.

> this reconciliation itself made the parable a capital weapon in the hands of the Protestant advocate of "justification by faith."[18]

The story was duly seized upon by the schoolmaster dramatists.

One of the earliest and most influential of the Latin school dramas about the prodigal son was *Acolastus* by the Dutch scholar Gulielmus Gnapheus (also known as Fullonius). *Acolastus* was acted by Gnapheus' pupils in the Hague in 1528 and was published in Antwerp in 1529. The play quickly became popular all over Europe: it went through eleven editions in five years, and was reprinted forty-eight times by 1585. It was translated into German, French and English.[19] John Palsgrave published his English translation of the play in 1540 in an edition designed for schoolboys, and there are copious references to *Acolastus* in subsequent English literature.[20] About *Acolastus* J. Dover Wilson remarks, "it would probably be difficult to overestimate the extent of its influence".[21] *Acolastus* boasts a tightly organized narrative plot and a balanced use of Terentian characters. Gnapheus omits the Elder Brother and instead supplies a counselor, Eubulus, for the bewildered father, Pelargus. The prodigal, Acolastus, and his adviser, Philautus ("self-love"), are balanced between the virtuous elders and a dissolute pair of parasites: a ruined prodigal, Pantolabus, and his instructor in parasitism, Pamphagus.[22] Gnapheus imitates the classical intrigue design as he dramatizes the parasites actively plotting against the prodigal, yet he recognizes that his serious treatment of a spiritual crisis is out of keeping with classical comic decorum.[23] In an introductory letter to the play Gnapheus writes,

> I have taken from Holy Scripture a story which I thought was suited to comic treatment -- except that here and there it involves outcries more appropriate to tragedy, and thus transgresses those laws of comedy handed down to us by Horace. However, I considered it a less serious crime to defy him than to depart from the meaning and dignity of the subject matter. For I preferred to respect the claims of religion rather than to observe some principle of literary decorum.[24]

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18. Herford, pp.152-153.
19. Atkinson, p.2.
20. Young cites references by Foxe, Nashe, Lyly, Jonson, Day, Gardiner and Nicholson; see pp.69-71f.
21. John Dover Wilson, "Euphues and the Prodigal Son", *The Library* 10 (1909) 337-361, 342.
22. See Atkinson, pp.6-25.
23. See Herrick's discussion of the infiltration of tragic qualities into these sacred "comedies", pp.16-30.
24. *"Argumentum delegi ex sacris, quod in comoediae formam cogi posse iudicarem, praeterquam quod hic res subinde in nimis Tragicas exeat exclamationes idquae praeter comicas illas leges, quas nobis tradidit Flaccus. Quod quidem crimen leuius esse duxim quam a sensu et rei dignitate recedere. Malui enim pietatis respectui quam litteraturae decoro alicubi seruire."* Letter to Johannes Sartorius of Amsterdam, translated by Atkinson, pp.84-85.

After the popular success of *Acolastus* many similar plays followed: among them were the *Samarites* (1539) of Papeus, the *Prodigus* of Crucius (published in 1605, but written between 1570-1604), and the *Dyscoli* of Schonaeus (1592). As well there were direct imitations of Gnapheus' play in the German vernacular drama, such as Binder's *Acolastus* (1545), Ackermann's *Verlornen Son* (1536), and Bohme's *Acolastus* (1618).[25] One similar play was actually composed before Gnapheus' *Acolastus*, though published nine years later. This was *Asotus*, by the Catholic schoolmaster Georgius Macropedius of Utrecht. In the preface to the first edition of *Asotus* in 1537, Macropedius says that this was his first dramatic composition, written thirty years earlier.[26]

The lively, intricate action of *Asotus* bears a genuine resemblance to classical comedy (especially the *Captivi* and the *Mostellaria* of Plautus), much more so than *Acolastus*, which follows the parable fairly closely.[27] Macropedius found considerable favour with the humanist audience, and *Asotus* inspired several German imitations: Risleben's *Asotus* (1586), Schon's *Asotus Poenitens* (1599), and Nendorf's *Asotus* (1608).[28] Equally influential were Macropedius' schoolboy comedies, *Rebelles* (published in 1535, but composed much earlier) and *Petriscus* (1536). These plays rework the sequence of the prodigal son's departure, riotous living, ruin, repentance, and forgiveness in the contemporary world of the Dutch schoolboy. Instead of squandering his inheritance, the prodigal abuses his opportunity of a good education and abandons his schoolwork for carousing and crime; his restoration consists of his return to the wise discipline of his schoolmaster. Far from being the moral patriarchs of *Acolastus*, *Asotus* and the Biblical parable, the parents of *Rebelles* and *Petriscus* incur blame for their sons' downfall. The two mothers in *Rebelles* have spoilt their boys by refusing to allow their schoolmasters to cane them when they misbehave; and Petriscus is permitted to run wild by his indulgent mother and weak father. In both

25. See H. Holstein, *Das Drama vom Verlornen Sohn* (Halle, 1880), pp.16-25, 37-38, 41.
26. The parallels between *Acolastus*, *Asotus* and Waldis' *Parabell vom Verlornen Sohn* lead Holstein to suspect an earlier source play, no longer extant, common to these dramas; p.41.
27. Macropedius wrote *Asotus* "in wholesale imitation of the ancients", according to Thomas W. Best, *Macropedius*, Twayne's World Author Series 218 (New York, 1972), p.41.
28. Holstein, pp.31-33, 36-37, 41. Asotus' English descendants include a character called "Asotus, or the prodigal" in Jonson's *Cynthia's Revels*; see the Induction, line 57, in *The Complete Plays*, edited by G. A. Wilkes (Oxford, 1981), Vol.II, p.3.

plays the schoolboys are brought to trial and condemned to hang for their crimes; only their schoolmasters' intervention saves them. Both the boys and the parents are transformed by this brush with death and all exhort the value of a strict upbringing and a disciplined education. Needless to say the Christian allegory of the parable is somewhat obscured in these schoolboy variations, but the combination of their boyish adventures in sin and their firm educational philosophy made these school plays very popular. *Rebelles* and *Petriscus* were imitated in Hayneccius' *Almansor* (1578) and Schonaeus' *Dyscoli* (1592).[29]

The exploits of the boys became even more Terentian when recast as the adventures of young men at university, since questions of love, marriage and money could be introduced.[30] Christophorus Stymmelius, a pupil of the Terentian commentator Willichius, tells the prodigal son story in a university setting in *Studentes* (1549), which Herrick describes as "possibly the most popular of all the prodigal-son plays".[31] Stymmelius presents three fathers who send their three sons to university, where one is a diligent student but the other two get into trouble. One prodigal, tellingly named Acolastus, betrays a respectable girl, and the other falls into debt. Stymmelius thus recreates the parable's contrast between the elder son and the prodigal with his presentation of the three students (and their three fathers, whose parental characteristics are likewise contrasted).[32] After vigorous negotiations between the parents, a marriage is arranged for the young lovers and the spendthrift's debts are paid. This comic conclusion is more of a social solution than a moral redemption, and thus the comedy is more Terentian in ethos than the prodigal plays of Gnapheus or Macropedius. The *Studentes* was widely admired and it inspired various imitations, among them Wichgrev's *Cornelius relegatus* (1600) and Schoch's *Comoedia vom Studentenleben* (1608).[33]

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29. See Franz Spengler, *Der Verlorene Sohn im Drama des XVI. Jahrhunderts* (Innsbruck, 1888), pp.113-124.
30. Ariosto plotted his last neoclassical comedy, *I Studenti*, along these lines.
31. Herrick, p.41.
32. Herford, p.157.
33. See Erich Schmidt, *Komödien vom Studentenleben aus dem Sechzehnten und Siebzehnten Jahrhundert* (Leipzig, 1880), pp.7-19, 27; see also Spengler, p.138.

The vernacular theatres of Europe translated, adapted and assimilated the most popular of the Christian Terence plays into their own dramatic traditions. In doing so the motifs of the Latin plays took on local detail and were moulded into the prevalent structures of the national drama, comic, tragic or otherwise. For example, the popular motif of the prodigal son was adapted in Germany into a series of romance plays about bourgeois life following Wickram's *Der Jungen Knaben Spiegel* (1553);[34] Cecchi shaped his *Figliuol Prodigo* (1570) along the lines of Italian *commedia*; while in England the prodigal supplanted the Everyman figure in a group of morality plays: Wever's *Lusty Juventus* (1550), *Nice Wanton* (1550), and Ingelend's *Disobedient Child* (1560).[35] Also in the English canon are two plays which clearly imitate the style and structure of the Christian Terence plays: one is Gascoigne's "tragical comedy", *The Glass of Government* (1575), and the other is the manuscript play of uncertain authorship, *Misogonus*, transcribed in 1577.[36] Yet while these works are obviously derived from the Latin prodigal son and student plays, they contain elements which are distinctly English. In the following discussion of *Misogonus* I shall explore the author's preoccupation with character-sketching and his structural use of characterization, qualities which set his play apart from the traditions of the Christian Terence and mark it as a prime example of the developing English comedy.

The first two acts of *Misogonus* follow the conventional events of the prodigal son story. The worried father, Philogonus, confides in his friend, Eupelas, that after the death of his wife he transferred all his affections to his son, Misogonus, and indulged the boy to excess:

> I could not suffer the cold wind to blow
> Without happing and lapping my youngling too much.
> What correction was, he never did know.
> (I.1.64-66)[37]

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34. Holstein, pp.45-49; Spengler, pp.126-136; Herford, pp.157-158.
35. See the discussions of the prodigal motif and the morality play in R. Warwick Bond's "Introductory Essay" to his *Early Plays from the Italian* (Oxford, 1911), pp.cv-cvii; Lily B. Campbell, *Divine Poetry and Drama in Sixteenth Century England* (Cambridge, 1959), pp.195-199; and Young, pp.79-117. Barber expresses his reservations about their conclusions, pp.53-54.
36. The motif of the prodigal son was popular in the prose literature of sixteenth-century England as well. See J. Dover Wilson, "Euphues"; also Richard Helgerson, *The Elizabethan Prodigals* (Berkeley, 1976).
37. All scene and line numbers refer to Lester Barber's edition of *Misogonus* (New York, 1979).

He allowed the boy to grow up without discipline or education and now regrets his permissiveness, for Misogonus has grown into a wild, vicious young man:

> He is waxed so stomachful and haughty of mind
> That neither God, nor man, nor anything he fears.
> ... With harlots and varlets and bawds he is manned.
> To the gallows, I fear me, he is treading the trace.
> (I.1.90-96)

Eupelas encourages Philogonus to think that all may yet be well and offers to confront Misogonus and persuade him to virtue. The household servant, Cacurgus, informs Misogonus of Eupelas' plan, and in a scene missing from the MS Misogonus defies his father's friend and threatens to beat him. After a rowdy scene of horseplay and singing Misogonus' flattering servants take their prodigal master off for an afternoon of carousing. Meanwhile Philogonus is grieved to hear from his faithful servant Liturgus of the poor treatment Eupelas received from his son; too late the father sees the error of his ways:

> If it were to do again, I know what to do.
> I would disple him, i'faith. I would tute him a-good.
> He should lack for no masters and governors, too.
> He should have whipping enough, be sure that he should.
> (II.1.244-247)

II.2 presents Misogonus in the arms of Melissa, *meretrix*; in her "bower" they and the servants drink and dance and gamble with the local priest, Sir John. The mischief-making Cacurgus leads Philogonus and Eupelas to witness this den of iniquity. Although the shocked Philogonus threatens to cut Misogonus out of his will, the prodigal defies him and departs, leaving the father to pour out "my grief here to the Lord in a doleful ditty" (II.2.413).

Although the incidents of Acts I and II do not follow the parable very closely, they are faithful to the dramatic tradition of prodigal son plays. Whereas in the parable the younger son asks for his portion and leaves home for a faraway place where his drinking, whoring and gambling lead to his destitution, in *Misogonus* the prodigal's sins are presented as the *status quo*. They have been going on for some time, for, like the prodigality of the schoolboys in *Rebelles* and *Petriscus*, Misogonus' waywardness has been nurtured by an indulgent upbringing. The educational philosophy of strict discipline, so dear to Macropedius' heart, is invoked within the first few minutes of

Misogonus, as are other conventions of the Christian Terence. The comforting presence of the father's counselor, Eupelas, recalls Eubulus in *Acolastus*, and the faithful servant Liturgus resembles the good servant Liturgus of *Petriscus*. The traditional pair of flattering parasites who lead the prodigal son into self-destruction (as do Pamphagus and Pantolabus in *Acolastus* and Spitzbove and Horenwerdt in Waldis' *Parabell*) are here transformed into Misogonus' servants, Orgalus and Oenophilus; in this function they recall the corrupt servant Comasta, who engineers the prodigal's orgy in *Asotus*. And of course the temptations of Melissa are mirrored in the *meretrices* of all the other prodigal plays: Lais in *Acolastus*, Margaenium and Planesium in *Asotus*, Lucrezia in Castellani's *Figliuol Prodigo*, Philocrysium and Philargyrium in *Petriscus*, to name but a few. The father's surprise interruption of the gambling party recalls the unexpected raid of the father and elder brother on the party of *Asotus*, but unlike the Latin play this event produces no effect in *Misogonus*; the prodigal simply defies his father's authority and promises to continue as he has begun:

> Do your best and your worst. I care not a pin for you, ay.
> I'll keep both her and the rest, in maugre your beard.
> (II.2.344-345)

From this point of confrontation *Misogonus* develops the story of the prodigal son in an unusual direction in Acts III and IV. Philogonus' prayer for heavenly deliverance is answered with unexpected news. In hopes of compensation a tenant farmer, Custer Codrus, and his wife Alison explain to Philogonus that his late wife gave birth to twins and secretly sent the elder son away to her brother in Apollonia. Philogonus is amazed and sends Liturgus to find this other heir. Despite the attempts of Cacurgus and Misogonus to halt the proceedings, the elder son Eugonus is brought home and duly recognized by the local midwives by the six toes on his right foot. Philogonus welcomes his long-lost son and grants him his lands; he promises to give Misogonus a portion if he will beg forgiveness, but the prodigal refuses. The servants see that there is no more "vantage" to be had out of Misogonus and abandon him. Realizing that he is alone, Misogonus despairs and repents of his wasted life. The faithful Liturgus convinces him to humble himself before God and his father, and after preaching a short sermon to the audience Misogonus begs his father's forgiveness. The

final scene of reconciliation is missing from the MS but the ending is clear, for the Prologue has summed up the conclusion: "together all, they joy and banquet at the last."

The motif of the long-lost child is not unusual in itself; it appears in various classical comedies, among them Terence's *Andria* and *Heautontimorumenos*, and Plautus' *Rudens* and *Captivi* (the latter being the only New Comedy example of a lost son). However, it is an uncommon element for the Christian Terence. The motif's dependence on chance is out of keeping with the educational drama's insistence on the moral agency of its characters. In affixing the story of the lost son to *Misogonus*, the playwright is drawing not only from Roman comedy but from popular English romance, in which the separation and fortuitous reunion of parents and children was a favourite narrative premise.[38] Doran comments, "it is interesting to note that one of the most important elements in *Misogonus* borrowed from New Comedy is the romantic one."[39]

In any case it is clear that the plot of *Misogonus* is an amalgamation of several dramatic traditions: the classical comedy, the neoclassical "Christian Terence", and the popular romance. Not only does *Misogonus* reproduce conventional motifs and characters, it draws on the organizational patterns of traditional plays to construct its plot scheme. The following pages will demonstrate the structural reliance of *Misogonus* on yet another genre, that of the morality play. From these diverse influences the author of *Misogonus* selects the elements which appeal to him and builds a plot relying heavily on character sketches. Within the rather wooden story, the playwright uses characterization to create moral tension, lively humour, and a certain emotional interest.

To understand the author's use of characterization in the structure of *Misogonus*, it is necessary to consider the relation of the characters to the narrative sequence. (See Figure 3.) Some of the characters are bound to the action, but others seems to be more

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38. As, for example, the separation of fathers and sons in *Apollonius of Tyre* and in the legends of St Eustace and St Clement in *The Golden Legend*. The motif of the lost daughter would be invoked again in the prose romances of Greene and the dramatic romances of Shakespeare. See Leo Salingar, *Shakespeare and the Traditions of Comedy* (Cambridge, 1974), pp.59-67.

39. Madeleine Doran, *Endeavors of Art* (Madison, 1954), p.162.

CHARACTER	BOUND	FREE	STATIC	DYNAMIC
PHILOGONUS	B		S	
EUPELAS		F	S	
CACURGUS		F		D
MISOGONUS	B			D
ORGALUS		F	S	
OENOPHILUS		F	S	
LITURGUS	B		S	
MELISSA		F	S	
SIR JOHN		F	S	
CLERK		F	S	
CODRUS	B		S	
ALISON	B		S	
ISBELL		F	S	
MADGE		F	S	
EUGONUS	B		S	
CRITO		F	S	

Figure 3
Misogonus
Characters in Relation to Narrative

decorative or amusing than active. The characters that are truly bound are those that derive from the parable: the father and the two sons. (The role of Eugonus is of course different from the parable's Elder Brother, both in action and in meaning, but is nonetheless a version of the virtuous son.) The play's story is tied to and dependent on the characterizations of Misogonus and Philogonus, and on the introduction of Eugonus into their relationship. In particular the moral characterizations are essential to the play's structure; Misogonus must be wicked and Philogonus and Eugonus must be good for the simple story of conflict and reconciliation to operate.

Misogonus is much like *Roister Doister* in that it contains characters whose narrative responsibilities are bound yet whose characterizations are freely handled. Custer Codrus and Alison perform the important narrative actions of alerting Philogonus to Eugonus' fate and recognizing him on his return; Madge Caro and Isbell Busby are auxiliaries to this function; yet all four personalities are freely drawn. One character alone would have sufficed to complete the action, and the only necessary characteristics would have been those of the classical *obstetrix* character: sufficient age and experience to remember Eugonus' birth. Instead *Misogonus* presents four gossipping, squabbling, self-interested rustics, whose independent concerns of lost sows, toothaches, and crop rotations intrude into the play. The creation of four such detailed and individualized roles to fill a single narrative function reveals an authorial interest and delight in characterization for its own sake.[40] Liturgus is a less entertaining character but is similarly constructed. His journey to Apollonia to fetch Eugonus is essential to the play's story (although it scarcely features in the plot), yet this action would not have required his steadfast Christian faith. Like Codrus and Alison, the character is bound but the sketch of his personality is free.

All the other characters are, in narrative terms, free. Orgalus, Oenophilus and Cacurgus might be seen to incite Misogonus to sin, but the play indicates that he would behave just as badly without them because of his indulgent upbringing. Cacurgus at times appears to initiate intrigue like a Roman clever slave character (or his Elizabethan

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40. As Winslow points out, it is unconventional to entrust such a crucial part of the action to low comic characters. Ola Elizabeth Winslow, *Low Comedy as a Structural Element in English Drama* (Chicago, 1926), p.88.

counterparts, Matthew Merrygreek and Jack Juggler), but the intrigue leads nowhere and does not advance the play's action.[41] His deception of Madge and Isbell in Act III, while given an ostensible though unfulfilled narrative motivation, is really an occasion for crowd-pleasing foolery.[42] Likewise Melissa and Sir John have little narrative weight; they function more as entertaining examples of Misogonus' dissolute living than as agents of action. Melissa's alleged marriage to Misogonus seems to promise further narrative action; at the end of II.2 the author seems to parody the mistaken *meretrices* of Roman comedy with the assertions that she is really "of a good parentage" (II.2.320) and that she has secretly become Misogonus' wife. However, instead of following this up with the recognition and reconciliation scene of Plautus or Terence (the scene which will take place in Act IV with the return of the lost son), the author drops the *meretrix* and this classical plot line altogether. The allegations were apparently not serious and the character loses her importance in the action. Sir John is characterized in much greater detail than Melissa, but he too is dropped after the gambling scene. This character has no narrative function; his appearance points instead to clerical satire.[43] His Clerk, Jack, has only two speeches and merely serves as an appendage to Sir John's corrupt characterization. The inclusion of such extended characterization for an extraneous character is notable; it indicates the priority which *Misogonus* gives to characterization in the plot.

The remaining characters, Eupelas and Crito, are supporters of virtue and the virtuous characters, Philogonus and Eugonus. They support these characters' actions but are not required for the completion of those actions. Crito accompanies Eugonus' return and oversees his identification in Laurentium, but these events could easily take place without him. It is difficult to assess accurately Eupelas' true narrative status because of his missing scene in the first act. However it is clear that no significant

41. See John V. Curry, *Deception in Elizabethan Comedy*, Jesuit Studies (Chicago, 1955), p.28.
42. Both toothaches and quackery were standard gags in the popular jest-books and mummers' plays.
43. Clerical satire was popular in both drama and prose. Sir John recalls the corrupt priests of Heywood's plays, particularly the lascivious Sir Jhan of *Johan Johan*. The 1564 edition of William Bullein's *A Dialogue Against the Fever Pestilence* describes a similar sort of friar: "[The Frier] was welbeloued in the countree, speciallie emong women; a close man. He was neuer without a bale of dice; Marie, he vsed no foisting nor cogging; he plaied well at tables, and of all meates he most loued a fat Pigge and a pudding, but he might not awaie to eate Communions nor read the scripture, it euer went against his stomacke ..." Edited by Mark W. Bullen and A. H. Bullen for the Early English Text Society, Extra Series, 52 (London, 1888, reprinted 1931), p.69, lines 8-16.

action ensues from the missing encounter. We can assume that the purpose of the scene was to prove Misogonus' wickedness, and to bring the audience to Eupelas' conclusion:

> It's true, I see well, that Philogonus said.
> The gallows groans for this wag as just rope-ripe.
> (I.1.438-439)

The ratio of six bound characters to ten free clearly indicates that narrative action is not the only motivation for the characterization in *Misogonus*. This is very different from the comedies of Plautus and Terence and their schoolmaster imitators, Macropedius, Gnapheus and Stymmelius. In these plays almost every character is bound to specific action, and often a character is individualized only enough to justify his or her deeds. *Misogonus*, however, offers a number of detailed roles that have little or no impact on the events of the story. One might argue that the story's action does not even begin until Act III; the characters in Acts I and II merely set up the initial situation of Misogonus' iniquity and Philogonus' distress.

In its presentation of free characters *Misogonus* displays vestiges of an English tradition of characterization: that of the morality play. The morality plays of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries tended to define characters not by their actions *per se* but by their moral positions. In these plays the story usually consists of the spiritual development of a hero -- typically temptation, a fall, despair, repentance and salvation -- rather than a series of causally linked events. Consequently the other characters need not be bound to particular action; instead they tend to designate in abstract terms the moral or spiritual states associated with the hero. Characters can be categorized as "virtues" or "vices" and dramatic tension is created out of their opposition. *Misogonus* is, in Sylvia Feldman's phrase, a "morality-patterned comedy".[44] The sinful characters, Cacurgus, Orgalus, Oenophilus, Melissa, and Sir John, have little impact on the play's story but evoke Misogonus' decadent and immoral condition. Likewise the virtuous characters, Eupelas and Liturgus, achieve little action with their preaching, but they signify the virtues of guidance and forgiveness that Philogonus offers. The presence of these polarized characters heightens the essential tension between the two main figures. The familiarity of this dialectical construction

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44. Sylvia D. Feldman, *The Morality-Patterned Comedy of the Renaissance* (The Hague, 1970).

would appeal, at least subconsciously, to an English audience's moral judgement of the characters.

It can be argued that *Misogonus*' precursors in the Christian Terence already contained morality elements. J. Dover Wilson contends that the Christian Terence was "a cross between the Latin comedy and the morality play",[45] and Feldman points out that the parable of the prodigal son is innately akin to the morality format:

> The parable ... follows a morality pattern, beginning with mankind's life in sin and ending with his forgiveness and his restoration to his proper place. The parable even suggests the didactic intention of the morality, since the son is meant to be sinful man and the father to be God.[46]

Certainly there is no denying the didactic intentions behind the sixteenth-century prodigal son plays, and to an extent the type characters of the Christian Terence do resemble the abstracted virtues and vices of the moralities. (Feldman, commenting on Palsgrave's translation of *Acolastus*, judges that Acolastus is "a mankind figure", Pelargus is "the major virtue figure", and Philautus is "the major vice figure".[47]) *Misogonus* contains similar moral polarizations. But where *Misogonus* differs from the Latin educational drama is in the relation between characters and narrative. The Latin writers, aspiring to a Terentian style, are careful to locate their characters in a causal sequence of events,[48] whereas *Misogonus* follows a more medieval model in presenting characters as self-contained moral exempla. A comparison of the parallel elements in *Misogonus* and *Acolastus* will elucidate the structural differences in the characterization.

In *Acolastus* the advice of the loyal friend, Eubulus, to the concerned father, Pelargus, leads directly to a narrative development: the granting of money and freedom to the prodigal son, Acolastus. In *Misogonus* the parallel advice of Eupelas to Philogonus leads only to an admonition of Misogonus, with no progress in the play's story. Similarly, in Gnapheus' play the encounter with the gamblers and the prostitute leads directly to Acolastus' ruin and despair; in *Misogonus* the encounter goes nowhere and merely demonstrates Misogonus' decadence, already understood from the play's exposition. Gnapheus' structural use of characterization is faithful to his model,

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45. Wilson, p.338.
46. Feldman, p.143.
47. Feldman, p.142.
48. As does Udall in *Roister Doister*; see Chapter 3.

Terence, in the subjugation of character to narrative requirements. Pamphagus and Pantolabus even discuss their Terentian ancestry. And while a few characters have a semi-allegorical function, as Feldman points out, this is not the dominant mode of characterization in *Acolastus*.

Nor is *Misogonus* primarily an allegorical play. The seven English-named characters are not allegorical at all, and the Greek-named characters stand for human types rather than abstract qualities (Philogonus as "child-lover", Cacurgus as "mischief-maker", Misogonus as "parent-hater", and so forth).[49] These Greek names are typical of the Christian Terence plays. The later English moralities like *All for Money* and *Like Will to Like* also chose to present exemplary types alongside the abstract allegorical figures.

Yet despite the absence of allegory, *Misogonus*' structural use of characters distinctly recalls the dialectic of the morality play. The influence of morality traditions appears in the specific characterizations as well. Cacurgus, who encourages Misogonus' sins and stage-manages his deceits and confrontations, is a recognizable descendant of the morality Vice character.[50] His frequent presence on stage (in nine out of the sixteen scenes -- see Figure 4) signals a starring role, which the main Vice character was.[51] Like the Vice Cacurgus disguises his personality to deceive the other characters, first as the fool and later as the Egyptian doctor. And he maintains the Vice's typically privileged access to the audience in his direct address and physical contact (I.1.277) during the two long *solus* scenes. Philautus has none of these characteristic elements.

The playwright highlights the moral polarization of his characters with his adroit use of verbal characterization. One of the most delighful features of *Misogonus* is the author's use of vernacular speech. F. P. Wilson rightly calls the play "a feast of

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49. Young glosses the characters' names, pp.119-121.
50. See Doran, p.163; Curry, p.28. Winslow comments on Cacurgus' role in the tradition of vice characters: "Further developments of the vice role tend mainly in the direction of making him more of an individual, less of a vice; and in making the manipulatory element merely one factor in a more complicated plot structure. The best example of this is Cacurgus in *Misogonus*." Winslow, p.87.
51. Cacurgus is much more obviously a Vice character than is Philautus, who disappears from *Acolastus* after Act I.

	I.1	I.2	I.3	I.4	II.1	II.2	II.3	II.4	II.5	III.1	III.2	III.3	IV.1	IV.2	IV.3	IV.4	no. scenes
PHILOGONUS	X						X		X	X			X	X		X	7
EUPELAS	X			X					X				X	X			5
CACURGUS		X	X			X	X	X		X	X	X			X		9
MISOGONUS			X	X	X	X		X	X		X			X		X	9
ORGALUS				X	X	X		X	X					X			6
OENOPHILUS					X	X		X	X					X			5
LITURGUS							X		X				X	X		X	5
MELISSA								X	X								2
SIR JOHN								X	X								2
CLERK								X									1
CODRUS										X			X	X			3
ALISON										X			X	X			3
ISBELL												X	X	X			3
MADGE												X	X	X			3
EUGONUS													X	X			2
CRITO													X	X			2

Figure 4
Misogonus
Scene-Character Grid

colloquial English".[52] The verse is hardly poetic, but its lively use of contractions, interjections, oaths, proverbs, slang and dialect creates a convincing illusion of spoken English (apart from the omnipresent rhymes). The author's talent for dialogue is put to special service in verbal characterization: not only does he depict conversational speech, he suggests different ways of speaking for all his characters, idiosyncrasies that serve as moral indicators. The extent and subtlety with which *Misogonus* employs verbal characterization are quite unprecedented in the English comedy and display a unique authorial fascination with the character illusion, entirely independent of the play's classical and neoclassical sources.

The virtuous characters have the least colourful language of the play, but their speech is nonetheless an effective indicator of their privileged place in the play's hierarchy. Philogonus, Eupelas, Liturgus and Eugonus speak in clean and formal language. For example, Philogonus greets his newly found son with a prayer:

> Eternal God, which only guid'st th'imperial pole aloft,
> And also this terrestrial globe, with all human affairs,
> Though frowning fortune with her force doth tip and turn us oft,
> Thou canst miraculously help thy servants unawares.
> (IV.1.170-173)

Even his servant, Liturgus, has mastered this stately style:

> Take heart of grace, man. That was but a cast of youthfulness.
> Though you were, by the frailness of your flesh, in your sins almost dead,
> Yet you may, as Saint Paul saith, by the spirit of God live again unto righteousness.
> (IV.3.10-12)

Except for appeals to "Lord" or "Christ" these characters refrain from the colourful oaths common in the rest of the play. Their word-choice and syntax are formal and educated; there is no indication of dialect in their speeches and there are few instances of colloquialisms.

The wicked characters, by contrast, use many oaths and slang expressions. Their speeches tend to be composed of short, often exclamatory sentences, rather than the long formulations of Eupelas and Philogonus. Colloquialisms abound in the long gambling scene, II.2, making it nearly unintelligible to the modern reader:

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52. F. P. Wilson, *The English Drama 1485-1585*, edited by G. K. Hunter, The Oxford History of English Literature, Vol.IV, Part 1 (Oxford, 1969), p.99.

SIR JOHN.
A pox consume it. It will now all slide.
At every cast I leese a noble or a crown.
OENOPHILUS.
Priest, down with that ruddock or I'll give over.
I'll not throw a'th'bare board. Set and thou't play.
SIR JOHN.
By God and all the world, I shall never this recover.
There 'tis. Be lucky yet. It's gone without stay.
ORGALUS.
Nay, I'll none of that, friend. You play not now with boys.
Every little wag-pasty could say, "naught stake, naught draw".
OENOPHILUS.
Tut, priest, bring't out. Thou hast it. We'll none of these toys
We are no such sucklings to take lubin law.
SIR JOHN.
By the body of our Lord Jesus Christ, they're all hab or nabs.
Either now come, or the devil and his dam go withal.
ORGALUS.
Is't my turn? Be true to your master then, my babes.
O lively luck! I have won a whole rial.
(II.2.185-198)

These characters are distinguished verbally from one another. Misogonus is particularly violent in his choice of expressions, cursing and flouting all who cross him. In I.1 he rages,

By His soul and His sides, by His death and His life,
I'll make the old fool repent this talk.
"Hamper me," quoth you? Where is my knife?
I'll stick him, by the mass, if this way he walk.
(I.1.357-360)

Misogonus is also characterized by his boasts and brags:

There's ne'er a goliah in this shire that shall scare me.
My heart is big enough, man, to fight with a score ...
And if he were a giant, could scarcely bring me under.
(III.2.29-37)

These boasts have prompted some critics to pronounce Misogonus a neoclassical *miles gloriosus*, but he may be equally indebted to the popular braggarts of the early Tudor comedy, Roister Doister and Thersites.[53]

Oenophilus is given all the fawning phrases of the classical parasite. In II.1 he thanks Misogonus for his beating and praises his strength:

I deserved mine and more too, I confess willingly.
You strike, I am sure, but of courage and might.

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53. See Campbell, p.202. P. L. Carver compares *Roister Doister* and *Acolastus* in his edition of *Palsgrave's Translation of The Comedy of Acolastus*, Early English Text Society, 202 (London, 1937), p.xcvi.

> I hope to see you passed the Nine Worthies, verily.
> I warrant you, within this year you shall be dubbed a knight.
> (II.1.79-82)[54]

Orgalus, his fellow, likewise flatters Misogonus in I.4, but their sycophantic language falls away as the play proceeds; their later speeches expose them as experienced gamblers out for their own profits.

Sir John's speeches contain various sacrilegious references to his office. He is "none of these new start-up rabbles" and thus is a target for satire of the unreformed clergy.[55] The clearest example comes as he instructs his Clerk to take his church service:

> Faith, Jack, it's no matter and all thy lesons be lacking.
> Say a *Magnificat nunc dimittis* and even end with the Creed.
> (II.2.242-243)[56]

Most of Sir John's lines place him as an addicted and vicious gambler; his insolence shines out in his last line, "A fart for you all!" (II.2.375).

The evocative contrast of the language of good and evil characters hearkens back to morality tradition, most obviously to *Mankind*, in which Mercy's formal pronunciation is derided by New Guise and Now-a-Days as "English Latin" and is taunted by the characteristic obscenity of the vices.[57] The language of the Mankind character changes as he moves between states of grace and sin. Glynne Wickham's comments on that play note the moral significance of verbal characterization:

> Words are regarded by the author to be of at least equal importance with deeds as tangible tokens of an individual's state of mind. The language given to all the characters, and its variations as the Interlude proceeds, are thus just as clear a guide to the development of the moral argument as any of their actions.[58]

To be sure, language is a much less important theme in *Misogonus* than in *Mankind*, but the verbal differentiations in character recall the older play. When he finally repents, Misogonus like Mankind drops his former speech for the proper language of the virtuous:

> God give grace that my father's anger, by his persuasion, may be mitigated.

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54. This comic comparison of a braggart with the Nine Worthies seems to have been a standard joke in Tudor theatre; it echoes *Roister Doister*, I.2.220 and anticipates the burlesque Pageant of the Nine Worthies in *Love's Labour's Lost*.
55. See Young, p.125.
56. See Edwin Shepard Miller, "'Magnificat Nunc Dimittis' in *Misogonus*", *Modern Language Notes* 60 (1945) 45-47.
57. *Mankind*, in *English Moral Interludes*, edited by Glynne Wickham (London, 1976), pp.1-35.
58. Wickham, p.2.

If he'll now take me to mercy, I'll never hereafter displease him anymore.
Who would e'er have thought that my courage so soon should have been abated.
A vile wretch, Misogonus. Couldst thou not have taken heed of this before?
Oh, all ye youthful race of gentle blood, take heed by this my fall.
(IV.3.29-33)

The outstanding verbal characterizations of *Misogonus* are those of the rustic characters. Bucolic characters are not common in the English morality plays, though they turn up occasionally. The rustic characters' most famous predecessors in the English theatre are the farcical figures of *Gammer Gurton's Needle* by Mr. S, another play with ties to Cambridge. Gammer Gurton and her fellows all speak in a thick rustic dialect with abundant colloquial idioms. In this play, however, verbal idiosyncrasy is uniform and not a differential feature of the characterization as it is in *Misogonus*. There is no reason why the characters who remember and recognize Eugonus should be country types; from their exuberant characterizations we can only suppose that rustic characters were funny and popular with the academic author, his players and their audience.59 The playwright has a good ear for rustic dialect and employs it for Codrus, Alison, Isbell, Madge, and Cacurgus in his native-fool guise. The characteristic style is established immediately upon Custer Codrus' entrance in III.1 with a pair of hens:

De good deen, master. Cha' brought you tway whochittals in my maunds.
Do you not hear of nobody that my zanded sow hath vound?
(III.1.52-53)

Lester Barber describes this dialect as northern, specificially Yorkshire, although he admits that there are no reliable records of sixteenth-century dialects. (He even uses dialect to attribute the authorship of *Misogonus* to Anthony Rudd, the only Yorkshire man of the candidates named in the MS.)[60] The dialect is expanded with a country vocabulary; copious references to crops, animals, weather and poverty turn up in line after line, as they do in the following discussion of Eugonus' birth:

CRITO.
How many year ago is't since he was born, can any of ye tell?
CODRUS.
It were after the rising 'rection i'th' North, I remember well.
Where was corn then, Alison? Let's see how that will mount.

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59. See E. Eckhardt, *Die Dialekt und Ausländerntypen des älteren Englischen Dramas* (Louvain, 1910), Vol.I, pp.4-79.
60. Lester E. Barber, "Anthony Rudd and the Authorship of *Misogonus*", *English Language Notes* 12 (1975) 255-260.

MADGE.
I gathered pe, pe, pe, peasecods at bau, bau, bau, Baul's Bush then, I'm sure,
And brought them to my mistress when she was with child.
CODRUS.
Thou wert neither o'th' court nor o'th' council. Speak, Alison. Whore!
How say'st? Were not Piper's hill then the rye field?
ALISON.
Ay, ma'y, wa'nt.
CODRUS.
Why umber't then. It's at least a score.
Three and three, three and three -- what's all that?
ALISON.
Three't no more. I ha't now. He is twenty and four.
Our Tom were born but a year after, I can tell flat.
(IV.1.129-140)

Madge receives further verbal characterization in the form of a stutter, apparently the result of a toothache (a common comic ailment):

Gossip Bub, Bub, Busby, I'd go full fain
And make a 'sposition as well as I could,
But here in my cho, cho, chops I have such a pain
That I can not conclare it though I would.
(III.2.77-80)

The stutter slows her speeches down in contrast to the garrulous Isbell who has, as she says, "tongue enough for's both" (III.2.81).

The verbal characterization is humorous in the rustic characters because the idioms and especially the malapropisms sound different and uneducated in comparison with the speech of the main characters (and, one expects, the speech of the Cambridge audience). Yet these very differences contribute to the realism of the characters. For example, Alison's rather improbable tale of the secret fate of the baby Eugonus is buoyed up by the more believable interruptions and distractions of her husband.

ALISON.
Though I say't and should not say't, I was her midwife, ay.
I can show you good tokens and arglements that this is so.
CODRUS.
By th' same token that he had two thumbs on one foot. Tut, she stood by.
Ponder the matter well. If she should not know't, who should know?
ALISON.
What, dost take th' tale out of my mouth? Shat tell't then for Alison?
And thou't needs ha't, take't thyself and say no more, but tell true.
CODRUS.
God's blothernales, dame, where had we you? Are you now in your crileson?
And thou say'st I lie, thou liest. As thou bak'st, so shat brew.
ALISON.
Ay, li'st thou me, cuckoldly knave? I'll ha' thee in my memorandum.
I may chance make thee lie i'th' dust ere long for thy lying.
CODRUS.
Th'art a crow-trodden whore. I'll not suffer thee and thou wert my grandum.
And th'ast not for this talk -- ne'er trust me -- ill keeving.

ALISON.
Threatens me, old ...?
CODRUS.
Hold thy tongue, 'bomination gom.
ALISON.
Nay, I'll descry thee to th' officials, as I am true maid, thou naughty pack.
CODRUS.
'Scry me to th' filsheals? Nay, then have at thee! To'm, boy. To'm.
Thou a maid! Th'art a jade. Before I knew thee thou wert an old, ridden Jack.
PHILOGONUS.
Nay, good neighbors, no more of this rule, but to th' matter return.
Leave me not i'th' briars, now you have told me thus much of my son.
CODRUS.
By this light that shines, master, all the fault, you may see's in her.
I would ne'er have had foul word and she had not begun.
ALISON.
And I had gone forward in my tale, and thou hadst not egged me like a folt.
CODRUS.
I neither egged thee nor colloped thee. If I had egged thee, thou might'st yet chese.
ALISON.
I'll tell on, master, if ye can make him keep in his fool's bolt.
PHILOGONUS.
Be quiet awhile, Codrus.
(III.1.190-213)

The colloquialisms tie the characters to the realities of rustic life. There is a naturalism to their interruptions, digressions and contractions that rings true even four hundred years later. It is largely the verbal characterization that makes the four rustic characters the most believable of the play; and the charm of these characters virtually redeems the narrative weaknesses of the plot.

Rustic speech is a differential part of the play's structural characterization, yet it is not equated with a moral position. Codrus and Alison seem to be aligned with virtue, despite their squabbles and pride, but Isbell and Madge are drawn as covetous and foolish, though nonetheless likeable in their gullibility. The moral status of the rustics may be qualified by the information that they still follow the old, unreformed faith which Philogonus disdains (III.1.150-158). In a play system which preaches virtue through education the rustic characters can be at best morally incomplete.[61] Their loving, loyal impulses ring of natural goodness, and they do not take part in the wickedness of Misogonus, Melissa and company, but neither do they stand on the moral high ground of Philogonus and Eupelas. The rustic speech, then, sets the characters aside socially and morally as "natural man". Seen in this light, the dramatic

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61. Custer Codrus, who sets the return of Eugonus in motion, boasts of his early education (IV.1.153-156).

ancestors of these characters are the shepherds of the various nativity plays, comic in diction, realistic in their concerns, humble yet sincere in their moral beliefs.62 The shepherds' presentations of horn spoons, bells, hoods, cherries and gloves to welcome the Christchild are the same kind of humble, realistic comedy as the scene in *Misogonus* in which Codrus and Alison carefully cut open Eugonus' hose to reveal his toes and thus identify and welcome him. Their successors in English comedy are the rustic truth-tellers of Shakespeare, Corin in *As You Like It*, Costard in *Love's Labour's Lost*, and the Clowns in *The Winter's Tale*.

Cacurgus receives a variety of verbal characterizations: they change as his persona does, from scene to scene. With Philogonus Cacurgus speaks in a rustic dialect which Barber identifies as "southern".[63] He uses "cha" for "I", "v" for "f", and "z" for "s", and he foolishly mixes up words.

CACURGUS.
Vounder, you must come zupper. The pig is led o'th'stable.
PHILOGONUS.
Alas, poor fool! He means the pig is laid on table.
(I.1.201-202)

This is not the dialect transcribed for the other rustic characters. Its dissimilarity to that "realistic" dialect and similarity to the dialects used in *Gammer Gurton's Needle* and briefly in *Roister Doister*, along with the various references to Will Summer and "playing the fool", may point to the use of a patently theatrical dialect. In any case, Cacurgus drops it entirely to speak to the audience in what might be his "true" diction. This includes direct address to the audience.

If you knew what delights he taketh in my presence
You would laugh, I dare say, now every chone.
(I.1.242-243)

In his guise as the Egyptian quack Cacurgus first employs a medical vocabulary of long words to impress Madge and Isbell, then a hodgepodge of herbal remedies to confuse them; these are accompanied by a grandiose, imperative style:

Good wife, did you not hear when I made protestation
Of my intelligible experience in the art medicinal?

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62. See, for example, the First and Second Shepherds' Plays in the *The Wakefield Pageants in the Towneley Cycle*, ed. A. C. Cawley (Manchester, 1958).
63. Barber, *Misogonus*, p.102f.

To the intent to heal good folk I showed that declaration,
For I ken now all things by cunning artifcial.
(III.2.150-153)

Finally, in his long self-advertising scene (IV.2), Cacurgus begins in his "fool" voice. then takes on the "crier's" voice and a new brief metre to promote his selling points. This unusual monologue is obviously designed as a showcase for the talents of the main comedian, who doubtless had all the traditional tricks of the fool and the vice in his repertoire.

They'll ha' the old fool no more, they say. They'll have a new.
What were I best to do now, sirs? Which on you can tell?
Is there any good body among ye wilt take me in, for God sake? ...
O, o, o, oyez!
If there be any gentleman
Or any gentlewoman
O'th' town or o'th' country
That will, for Saint Charity,
Receive a stray fool,
One is here on this stool
That can roll out dough
And that can peel a potato;
That can chase flies
And that can peck peas ...
They say it's good luck to seek one's fortune by labor.
By God, I think I must play the fool still, iwis.
Work doth me annoy. I'd rather I could fool my neighbor.
(IV.2.8-10, 21-31, 83-85)

In the role of Cacurgus, then, we can see verbal idiosyncrasy being used as an entertaining commodity in its own right. Cacurgus' language does not pretend to supply the illusion of a real person's characteristic speech; in this self-consciously theatrical part we can see that the characterization is sham, as easily dropped as taken up.

As we have seen, the clever use of verbal characterization in *Misogonus* serves a double agenda: it presents the idiosyncrasies of individual personalities and it locates the characters in a moral scheme. The playwright needs to anchor each character's meaning in words and gestures for only a few characters enter into the main action of the narrative. *Misogonus* partially concedes to the classical notion that characters should be revealed by their actions in that it provides tableaux in which the sinners drink and gamble and the good men pray and preach. But, as we have seen, these demonstrations are remarkably inconsequential in the narrative. In the plot of

Misogonus only a few characters are shown making important choices or taking actions which determine their meaning as characters; and only Misogonus himself is truly a dynamic, "developing" character. The others remain static figures of entertaining personalities and moral positions. (See Figure 3.)

Such plotting reveals the morality play's emphasis on the individual's moral dilemma in a static, polarized world. In short the static characterizations serve as a foil for Misogonus' character development. The play's dialectical underpinning requires a clear opposition between good and bad characters; static characterization is most appropriate for characters who will be acknowledged as moral constants. It is perhaps for the purposes of moral clarity that the author does not attempt to reform any of the other sinning characters. Lester Barber notes that, unlike Roman comedy, the wayward servants are not forgiven and reintegrated into Philogonus' society at the end of the play; instead they leave to continue their mischief elsewhere.[64]

Misogonus is the primary dynamic character; the whole play is constructed to describe his development. Obviously this is reminiscent of the morality play. However, the mankind-hero of the morality has been replaced by a specific individual character, firmly grounded in a specific society with a name, relationships, a past and a future. This localization of the abstract character includes a new element: his fall into sin is caused not by temptations but by an indulgent upbringing. His conversion is likewise specified and seems to be motivated as much by financial concerns as by spiritual exhortation. It is interesting to see realistic comic characterization making inroads into the morality psychomachia. But it is more important here to note the radical implications which the theme of Christian reformation injects into neoclassical comic doctrine. Ervin Beck writes,

> Prodigal-son comedy, grounded in Christian theology and morality, assumes that character can and should change -- and significantly so, since change from one moral state to another has everlasting consequences. It is true that prodigal-son comedy introduces its own character type, the young man who changes from good to bad to good again; but this character type implies a radical departure from the assumptions underlying the classical understanding of decorum of character. One important consequence for drama is that, in its protagonist, prodigal-son comedy offers a character that is subject to multiple variations in

64. Barber, p.64. To be sure this is not as severe as some of the other prodigal plays. In *Petriscus* the prostitues are beaten and the schoolboy companions of the prodigal are hanged; in *Nice Wanton* one prodigal is hanged and the other dies of the pox.

development, as opposed to that of the adolescent in New Comedy, whose role is more or less fixed.[65]

In short, the use of dynamic characterization in comedy is noteworthy in itself. Not only does this development offer greater depth for individual character sketches, but, as I have shown, dynamic characterization offers new possibilities for the overall structure of comedy. As in *Misogonus* the dramatist could oppose static types with an illusion of developing personalities in order to differentiate his characters and manipulate the audience's sympathy for them. Where classical comedy required chance to break the conflict and achieve the happy ending, Renaissance comedy could employ human flexibility: a change of attitude, emotion, or faith. Semiotically this is a radical development in the potential of the comic character: it can change meaning without jeopardizing the audience's understanding of the play as a system. Aesthetically this development marks a shift towards naturalism and motivation in creating the character illusion. And structurally, the use of the dynamic character makes characterization a more complex and important part of a play. These various developments are not manifested solely in *Misogonus*, of course. But *Misogonus* is perhaps the earliest extant comedy in England to make dynamic characterization a central concern. Interest in the emotional choices and development of the individual was to become a major feature of the romantic comedy developed by Greene and Shakespeare.

Coincident with the reformation of the prodigal in *Misogonus* is a major modification to the paradigm of classical comedy. The New Comedy of Menander, Plautus and Terence typically describes the success of the young man despite the pressures of his society and, in particular, the objections of his father or father-surrogate.[66] This success is often achieved with the help of chance, as if the young man's destiny is natural and inevitable. In any case, the New Comedy usually concludes with a marriage and, as Northrop Frye interprets it, the promise of a new society committed to the values of youth.[67]

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65. Ervin Beck, "Terence Improved: The Paradigm of the Prodigal Son in English Renaissance Comedy", *Renaissance Drama* N.S. 6 (1973) 107-122, 114.
66. See Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism* (Princeton, 1957), pp.164-165.
67. Frye, p.163.

The prodigal son story, when rendered in comic form, concludes instead with the young man's return to his father and his father's values. The patriarchal society is stable and right, and the young man's departure from it is an obvious deviation from the natural order of life. With his reformation and return that order is simultaneously maintained and renewed.[68] The Latin educational comedies of the prodigal son were of course written as a specific response to the plays of Plautus and Terence, and the authors' didactic intentions resulted in an inversion of the classical pattern.[69] Instead their comedy celebrated a conservative tenacity to the social order. Helgerson comments on the historical context of these comedies:

> ... they served as a vehicle for the conservative fears of men who had lived through the period of dangerously rapid change brought on by the Reformation, men to whom the world necessarily seemed beset with perilous temptations. ... In them society is not remade; it is affirmed.[70]

Yet for comedy to offer this representation of a stable society, it had to breach the traditional decorum of the stable character. Classical and neoclassical doctrine held that characters were defined by typical traits of their age, sex, class, and station in life, and that within the comic action characters should behave appropriately for their type.[71] The comic society, as represented by the world of the play, was fluid and flexible enough to tolerate all types. The resolution of Terence's *Eunuchus* includes the braggart, the parasite, and the rapist as well as the lovers and the newly reunited brother and sister. The comic conclusion involves a change in situations and relationships but not a change in the meaning of individual characters. Similarly in the early Tudor comedy Heywood includes all kinds of weather, all kinds of lovers, and all kinds of hypocrites in the conclusions of his *Play of the Weather*, *Play of Love*, and *The Pardoner and the Frere*. Likewise the final banquet of Udall's *Roister Doister* includes the braggart and mischief-maker who jeopardized the union of the lovers.

Misogonus and the Latin prodigal son plays do not, however, represent such a tolerant society. Philogonus finally gives up on his wilful son and goes off to his feast

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68. See Beck, pp.111-112.
69. Beck, p.111.
70. Helgerson, pp.34-35.
71. As late as 1587 neoclassical critics were still struggling to account for development or change within the comic type characters. Antonius Riccobonus wrote in his *Poetica Aristotelis* (Padua, 1587), "I say that change of character ought not to be admitted unless some very good reason is expressed, which is strong enough to bring it about." Translated in Herrick, *Tragicomedy*, p.146.

with his virtuous companions. The society refuses to accept the prodigal unless he takes individual responsibility for his fate. In *Misogonus* the change in the character is pronounced: not only does his violent language give way to devout prayers but his companions in sin disappear from his side. (They are not pardoned and accepted.) This metamorphosis is absolutely necessary for the comedy to reach its ending of social affirmation. In the structural application of characterization, then, *Misogonus* and the prodigal son comedies offer a new option for the dramatists, or, as Beck says,

> ... a Christian alternative. Man need not be a victim of his physical or social existence. Age and social position merely determine certain modes of his being, through which his true self may nevertheless emerge, thus transcending the limitations of the physical and social realms.[72]

If comic decorum is to allow characters to develop and discover their "true selves" then clearly the artistic representation of individual personality will become a more central dramaturgical concern. In Terentian comedy, Frye notes, "The main ethical interest falls as a rule on the blocking characters ... the miserly or ferocious parent, the boastful or foppish rival, or the other characters who stand in the way of the action." The technical hero and heroine, on the other hand, "are not often very interesting people".[73] By contrast, the inner conflict of the prodigal son makes him, as Beck says, "the most fully developed, and the most interesting character in his play. His reformation is effected not by arbitrary device, or merely factual discovery, but rather by a causative process that leads to his self-recognition and a purgation of his vicious humor."[74]

As Beck's Aristotelian language suggests, the interest in the internally motivated individual appeals more to tragic theory than to comic. Gnapheus realized as early as 1529 that the serious question of individual salvation would transgress the comic decorum of Horace.[75] But perhaps he would have been surprised to learn of the far-reaching consequences which his focus on the moral choices of the individual would have on the development of the comic genre. As we have seen, both the depiction of individual characters and the relationship of characterization to the overall play

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72. Beck, p.114.
73. Frye, p.167.
74. Beck, pp.112-113.
75. See the quotation from Gnapheus' prefatory letter to *Acolastus* in note 24 above.

structure were substantially altered by the experiments of the moral comedies. Marvin Herrick writes convincingly of the influence of the Christian Terence on the development of tragicomedy in Europe generally, and of course one of the prime English examples of the educational drama, Gascoigne's *Glass of Government*, calls itself a "tragical comedy".[76]

Misogonus, however, calls itself "a Merry and Pleasant Comedy" and certainly many of its features respond to the tradition of English comedy as it existed in the 1570s. The major presence of the mischievous Cacurgus recalls the dominant comic tricksters of *Jack Juggler, Roister Doister, Gammer Gurton's Needle, The Bugbears* and *The Supposes*.[77] The element of mischief in the comedy is heightened by the scurrilous activities of Sir John, a corrupt priest in the style of Heywood. The long, lively gambling scene informs Misogonus' character but more crucially it amuses, with its mounting tension over the throw of the dice and its release of energy into the dancing. Likewise the rustic characters of the second half of the play provide considerable amusement, especially in the extraneous episode of the toothache and the quack. The extended character sketches of the rustics are entertaining in their own right in the same farcical style as *Gammer Gurton's Needle*, but as well the competing ambitions of Codrus, Alison, Isbell and Madge provide a funny, homespun background to the affairs of Philogonus, Eugonus and Misogonus.

It is in the treatment of the main characters that *Misogonus* ventures away from conventional comic ground into more tragic territory. The emotional complaints of Philogonus and later of Misogonus bear a certain resemblance to Act V of *Roister Doister*, when Christian Custance uses tragic diction to beg for heavenly protection. The difference is that *Roister Doister*'s concern is essentially social -- it is Christian Custance's marriage and good name that are at stake -- while in *Misogonus* the concern is individual and spiritual. In his lament in Act II Philogonus begs for salvation:

> Help, Lord. Help, Lord. Help yet in time,
> And lay not to my charge this crime.

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76. Herrick, pp.16-62.

77. See Curry, p.28; one might also compare Cacurgus with the duplicitous servants who take dominant roles in the popular romances, such as the eponymous *Common Conditions*, Subtle Shift in *Clyomon and Clamydes*, and Ambidexter in *Cambises*.

> Pardon for that is past I crave,
> With hope some help of Thee to have.
> (II.2.473-476)

Misogonus' sense of spiritual crisis at the end of the play is even more desperate:

> Oh God! Oh devil! Oh heaven! Oh hell! My heart now rents in twain.
> A comes! a comes! a comes! I shall die in desperation.
> To hang myself, surely, I think now I must be fain.
> I have sinned so much that I'm quite past hope of salvation.
> (IV.1.246-249)

This dynamic treatment of an individual conscience brings the interest of the morality play and of tragedy into the comic world. It is a slightly uneasy development.

However, it is true that individual psychology had been a comic concern of Tudor comedy for much of the century. Heywood played up the inner conflicts of the henpecked husband in *Johan Johan*, contrasting his private desires and outward behaviour for comic effect. Udall, too, dramatized the humorous discrepancy between imagination and disappointing reality in *Roister Doister*, particularly in the characters' fallible ideas of themselves and their place in the world. In a sense *Misogonus*' introduction of dynamic characterization simply takes the issue one step further: as well as presenting a personality in conflict, the playwright dramatizes its resolution. Where *Johan Johan* and *Roister Doister* conclude on the premise that their heroes will perpetuate their delusions infinitely, *Misogonus* offers the posibility of changing and achieving self-knowledge, an idea which would have profound resonance for the comic dramatists of the 1580s and 90s. With *Misogonus* the comic character becomes a dynamic entity.

CHAPTER 5

"COURTIERS FOR COMMEDIES": LYLIAN CHARACTERIZATION AND THE SELF-CONSCIOUS AUDIENCE

Johan Johan, Roister Doister and *Misogonus* all observe the classical conventions of comedy by presenting the human action of private citizens in domestic situations. Other comedies of the period like *Jack Juggler, Gammer Gurton's Needle, The Supposes* and *The Bugbears* follow the same basic pattern. Although *Roister Doister* and *Misogonus* stray from the strictly causal sequence of classical narrative to present satirical and moral episodes, the characters in these diversions still represent human figures taking part in action, albeit anecdotal or exemplary.

In the 1580s, however, the potential function of comic character was radically expanded to express more abstract values and relationships. The human figure of the neoclassical character acquired something of the semiotic function of the morality character. The neoclassical plot structure of narrative action likewise developed into more complex, experimental forms with multiple story lines linked by thematic relationships. The English sense of what a comedy could be was changing rapidly.

To a great extent these developments stem from the dramatic experiments of John Lyly (c. 1554-1606).[1] Following the vogue of his prose works, *Euphues: The Anatomy of Wit* and *Euphues and his England*, Lyly continued to delight the Elizabethan court with a series of comedies for the boy players of the Chapel Royal and St Paul's. Lyly's plays resist classification by genre: they defy the traditional decorum of cast by mingling divine, royal and historical characters with low, private, fictional types; they reject utterly the unities of time and place; at times they even evade the basic Aristotelian criterion of the representation of a completed human action. Lyly ignores these requirements in favour of new forms of plot and character organization. Only *Mother Bombie*, a tightly-structured play styled on a Terentian intrigue model,

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1. For Lyly's biography see Albert Feuillerat, *John Lyly* (Cambridge, 1910); Joseph W. Houppert, *John Lyly*, Twayne's English Author Series, 177 (Boston, 1975); and G. K. Hunter, *John Lyly: The Humanist as Courtier* (London, 1962).

conforms to traditional rules of comedy. The other seven plays constitute a deliberate challenge to the theoretical comic prescriptions of the day.

Lyly's prologues in particular describe his knowledge and rejection of the standard theory. In *Campaspe*, one of Lyly's earliest plays, the "Prologue at the Black Fryers" makes a standard claim for the social utility of the comedy:

> We have mixed mirth with counsell, and discipline with delight, thinking it not amisse in the same garden to sowe pot-hearbes, that we set flowers.[2]

While not explicitly moral, this justification resembles the claims for the moral value of comedy set out in the prologues of *Roister Doister* and *Jack Juggler*.[3] Lyly repeats this claim for "counsell mixed with wit" in the "Prologue at the Black Fryers" of his next play, *Sapho and Phao*, but announces a deliberate break from comic custom, away from his audience's "wonted mirths".

> Our intent was at this time to moue inward delight, not outward lightnesse, and to breede (if it might bee) soft smiling, not loude laughing: knowing it to the wise to be as great pleasure to heare counsell mixed with witte, as to the foolish to haue sporte mingled with rudenesse.[4]

With this flattering final phrase Lyly indicates that the nature of his particular audience has motivated his move towards a new, more refined form of comedy (one which is in line with the ideals of his contemporary, Sir Philip Sidney).[5] The Prologue's initial apprehension that the audience will not find *Sapho and Phao* sufficiently funny but will leave the play with "a sowre mislike: and with open reproach blame our good meanings because you cannot reape your wonted mirths" seems to have been unfounded, since Lyly went on to write several more plays in the same style; nonetheless, one senses in

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2. John Lyly, *Campaspe*, in *The Complete Works*, edited by R. Warwick Bond (Oxford, 1902), Vol.II, p.315.
3. Nicholas Udall, *Roister Doister*, in *Four Tudor Comedies*, ed. William Tydeman (Harmondsworth, 1984), pp.95-205, Prologue, lines 1-18; *Jack Juggler*, in Tydeman, pp.45-94, Prologue, lines 10-55.
4. Lyly, *Sapho and Phao*, in *The Complete Works*, II, p.371.
5. In the "Defence of Poetry" Sidney writes, "Our comedians think there is no delight without laughter, which is very wrong, for though laughter may come with delight, yet cometh it not of delight, as though delight should be the cause of laughter. ... for delight we scarcely do but in things that have a conveniency to ourselves or to the general nature; laughter almost ever cometh of things most disproportioned to ourselves and nature. Delight hath a joy in it, either permanent or present. Laughter hath only a scornful tickling. ... But I speak to this purpose, that all the end of the comical part be not upon such scornful matters as stir laughter only, but, mixed with it, that delightful teaching which is the end of poesy." "A Defence of Poetry", *Miscellaneous Prose of Sir Philip Sidney*, edited by Katherine Duncan-Jones and Jan Van Dorsten (Oxford, 1973), pp.59-121, 115-116. For comparisons of the theories of Lyly and Sidney, see Peter Saccio, *The Court Comedies of John Lyly* (Princeton, 1969), pp.218-223; E. C. Pettet, *Shakespeare and the Romance Tradition* (London, 1949), p.36; William G. McCollom, "From Dissonance to Harmony: The Evolution of Early English Comedy", *Theatre Annual* 21 (1964) 69-96, 90.

the lines a professional producer's assessment of his market. Conscious of current theatrical trends Lyly anticipates his audience's objections to his innovations but overrides them with flattery. This open recognition of the audience's influence on the shaping of plays was itself one of Lyly's innovations, as J. W. H. Atkins points out;[6] it continues on from the prologues into the actual construction of the plays, which Lyly shaped into elaborate, allusive compliments for Elizabeth and the rest of the courtly audience.

This blatantly audience-oriented scheme of play construction led Lyly away from the traditional narrative organizations of tragedy and comedy, towards more ambiguous, situational arrangements of scenes and characters around a central theme. Lyly himself recogized the ambiguity of his format; in the Prologue to *Endimion* he declares, "Wee present neither comedie, nor tragedie, nor storie, nor any thing".[7] The Prologue in Paul's to *Midas* describes the makeup of the new form as a conglomeration of various fashions and devices; it also reiterates the formative influence of the audience on the drama.

> At our exercises, Souldiers call for Tragedies, their obiect is bloud: Courtiers for Commedies, their subiect is loue; Countriemen for Pastoralles, Shepheards are their Saintes. ... all commeth to this passe, that what heretofore hath beene serued in seuerall dishes for a feaste, is now minced in a charger for a Gallimaufrey. If wee present a mingle-mangle, our fault is to be excused, because the whole worlde is become an Hodge-podge.[8]

The composite dramatic form reflects an increasingly diverse society, the Prologue suggests,[9] but it also reveals Lyly as the conscious craftsman trying, with some exasperation, to please his audience. The advent of the permanent, professional theatres in London surely encouraged such attitudes: then as now, capitalist theatre was geared towards the consumer. Lyly had been a shareholder in the Blackfriars lease in 1583-84 and was well acquainted with the importance of the day's takings.[10]

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6. J. W. H. Atkins, *English Literary Criticism: The Renascence* (New York and London, 1947, reprinted 1968), p. 240.
7. Lyly, *Endimion*, in *The Complete Works*, III, p.20.
8. Lyly, *Midas*, in *The Complete Works*, III, p.115.
9. For a more thorough treatment of this idea, see Robert Weimann, "History and the Issue of Authority in Representation: The Elizabethan Theater and the Reformation", *New Literary History* 17 (1986) 449-476.
10. Hunter, pp.73-75.

Towards the end of the 1580's Lyly seems to have turned outside the court for his primary audiences. His connection with his patron, the Earl of Oxford, diminished around 1588, and with it Lyly's hopes for a court appointment, specifically that of Master of the Revels. So Lyly seems to have turned to his paying public for the performance fashions to shape his last plays, *Mother Bombie, Love's Metamorphosis,* and *The Woman in the Moon. Mother Bombie* was "sundrie times plaied by the Children of Powles" who were regular performers at court, but this play did not, apparently, appear there.[11] It is quite different from Lyly's other plays and would seem to reflect a non-courtly audience with its cast of private citizens, English setting, and narrative intrigue plot. *Love's Metamorphosis* was played by the Children of Paul's; the title page of the original 1601 quarto calls it a "courtly pastorall" but mentions no specific court performance. It exists in an unusually brief form which may or may not be a revision of Lyly's original, as it was later performed by the Children of the Chapel in 1600. *The Woman in the Moon* differs from Lyly's court comedies in several ways. It is the only one of Lyly's plays to be written in verse; and it seems to have been intended for a non-courtly performance. The court stage could not have accommodated its use of an upper stage and a trap door, and its clown character, Gunophilus, engages in rough banter with the audience which might seem out of place in a courtly setting. There is no evidence that *The Woman in the Moon* was performed by the Children of Paul's, and many scholars have assumed that it was played by one of the men's companies after the suppression of the Paul's boys in 1590.

Lyly's notions of comedy, therefore, change over the course of his career. Although clearly knowledgable about traditional comic theories and practices, Lyly consciously defies them with a new, refined comic mode that favours "delight" more than laughter. He achieves this by mingling diverse elements, rejecting the classical categories, and, above all, by subjugating the standard comic subjects and aesthetic to his primary (courtier's) aim of presenting whatever will best please (and flatter) his audience. As Atkins writes, "he denies that the boundaries of the dramatic species had been permanently fixed, thereby suggesting the principle of free development."[12] In

11. Title page of *Mother Bombie*, in Lyly, *The Complete Works*, III, p.171.
12. Atkins, p.240.

the act of rejecting "comedy" *per se* Lyly makes a creative leap which would encourage the diversity of Elizabethan comedy.

Lyly's innovations have necessary repercussions on his characters and his structural use of characterization in the plays. He opens up the traditional comic cast list of "low", private characters and introduces gods, rulers, and heroes from classical history and mythology, some of whom he employs in highly emblematic and allegorical functions. He arranges characters in mathematical designs, in groups and parallel patterns of action, rather than linking them with a narrative line. This in turn spawns a new interest in their formal and implicit relationships which would be developed further by Greene and Shakespeare. As well, Lyly rejects the static meanings of characters imbedded in older theories of comic decorum; Lyly's characters become literally dynamic as they undergo metamorphoses into the opposite sex, into animals, vegetables, and even minerals. Lyly employs such diverse methods that a general picture of his use of characterization is difficult to draw, especially as he abandons some of his earlier methods in his later plays. Yet the very paradoxes of Lylian characterization had a profound effect on the comic characterization of his followers. For this reason, I shall discuss and compare the uses of characterization in Lyly's most contradictory play: the experimental, ambiguous *Endimion*.

The first edition of *Endimion* bears the description "play'd before the Queene's Majestie at Greenwich on Candlemas day at night", and scholarly consensus dates this occasion as 2 February 1588.[13] It was performed by the Children of Paul's, who had played Lyly's *Gallathea* at court only a month before. These children, the choristers of St Paul's Cathedral, were at this time under the direction of Thomas Gyles, who may have been assisted by Lyly in the production of plays. In the late 1580s they performed plays at court once or twice a year and offered their "rehearsals" to the paying public at their own playhouse at St Paul's.[14] Presumably *Endimion* was seen there as well as at

13. E. K. Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage* (Oxford, 1923) Vol.III, p.415. Alfred Harbage, *Annals of English Drama 975-1700*, third edition, revised by S. Schoenbaum and Sylvia Stoler Wagonheim (London and New York, 1989), p.54. Hunter, p.76. Saccio, p.225.

14. For more information about the Children of Paul's, see Reavley Gair, *The Children of Paul's: the story of a theatre company 1553-1608* (Cambridge, 1982); Harold Newcomb Hillebrand, *The Child Actors* (New York, 1964); Michael Shapiro, *Children of the Revels* (New York, 1977).

court. *Endimion* requires at least fifteen players for twenty-three speaking roles; at least six of the players must sing.

For his central premise Lyly draws on the Greek myth of Endymion. In the traditional story Diana, the moon goddess, falls in love with the beautiful youth, Endymion, and descends from her accustomed place to kiss him as he sleeps.[15] Lyly maintains this lovely incident but changes its motivation: since he intended to compliment Queen Elizabeth with his play, he could not show his chaste goddess subject to a passion for a mere mortal.[16] Instead he reverses the myth's relationship and makes his Endimion pine for the beautiful, unattainable moon, Cynthia. The kiss becomes a gesture of sovereign graciousness intended to reward the virtuous subject.

The play is organized around the theme of love, primarily demonstrated by the courtier Endimion's devotion to the divine queen Cynthia. This central, chaste compliment to Elizabeth is surrounded by other stories of unrequited love: the revenge of the jilted Tellus, who loves Endimion; Endimion's friend Eumenides, who struggles between the ties of their friendship and his love for a sharp-tongued nymph; the dog-like love of the soldier Corsites for his indifferent prisoner, Tellus; and the ridiculous love of the foolish braggart Sir Tophas for an old crone -- the latter story embellished by the witty banter of three young pages. Despite this assortment of relationships, the play's action is discrete. The action begins with Tellus' discovery that Endimion has merely pretended to love her while secretly worshipping Cynthia; she revenges herself by employing the witch Dipsas to cast Endimion into an enchanted sleep. Cynthia sends her courtiers to search for a remedy and punishes Tellus for her malicious remarks by imprisoning her under the guard of the soldier, Corsites. Tellus persuades her adoring gaoler to try to remove Endimion's sleeping body, but Corsites is thwarted in his attempt by tormenting fairies. The foolish braggart, Sir Tophas, acts the part of the lover in his farcical passion for the old crone, Dipsas. Meanwhile Eumenides discovers a magic fountain overseen by the old man, Geron; from the oracle he learns that a kiss from Cynthia will awaken Endimion. Cynthia successfully applies this

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15. Edward Semple LeComte recounts the many invocations of this scene in Elizabethan literature in *Endymion in England: The Literary History of a Greek Myth* (New York, 1944), pp.40-46, 58-64.
16. Likewise in *Sapho and Phao* the Queen is shown to be above the claims of love, and in *Campaspe* the ruling monarch Alexander overcomes his personal passion for the good of his state.

remedy and accepts Endimion's renewed devotion, thus restoring his youth. The crimes of Tellus and Dipsas are now exposed, but the two conspirators are penitent and Cynthia forgives them. In the final scene Cynthia reunites Dipsas with her estranged husband, Geron, and joins Tellus with Corsites, Eumenides with his beloved Semele, and Sir Tophas with the nymph Bagoa. The action, then, is sequential but not entirely causal. Lyly provides only a rough justification for his formal situations. The primary situation of Endimion's devotion to the chaste queen scarcely changes, and the eventual resolutions of the other characters are not generated organically from the action; instead they are imposed from on high by Cynthia, Lyly's built-in *deus ex machina*.

Such a static plot has immediate consequences for its characterization, since "character" is usually demonstrated by the choices and actions taken by the *dramatis personae*.[17] In *Endimion*, however, the title character sleeps through Acts III and IV, becoming an object of action instead of an agent. The result of this passivity, writes Michael Best, is that "we cannot think of him as a character."[18] Indeed most of the characters are better expressed by their situations than by their actions: for example, Geron is the estranged husband of Dipsas: his meaning is derived from an offstage "past" rather than from onstage events. Likewise, Sir Tophas' meaning as a lover is strictly verbal, since he never meets Dipsas during the course of the action.

Lylian characterization is typically achieved through dialogue. One character may describe him- or herself or another character (often servants or subjects describe their masters or leaders);[19] verbal or stylistic idiosyncrasy may differentiate the characters (for instance, the Latin phrases of Sir Tophas or the punning of the three pages);[20] or characters may argue different sides of a question, a heritage from the tradition of debate as entertainment, whereby the character is identified by his polarized position.[21] This last technique, prevalent in *Midas* and *Campaspe*, exists in a modified

17. Michael R. Best elaborates this point in "Lyly's Static Drama", *Renaissance Drama* N.S.1 (1968) 75-86.
18. Best, p.76.
19. Bond, "Lyly as a Playwright", *The Complete Works*, II, pp.232-299, p.280.
20. Jocelyn Powell, "John Lyly and the Language of Play", in *Elizabethan Theatre*, Stratford-upon-Avon Studies, 9, edited by John Russell Brown and Bernard Harris (London, 1966), pp.147-167, p.158; Walter N. King, "John Lyly and Elizabethan Rhetoric", *Studies in Philology* 52 (1955) 149-161, p.153.
21. Heywood's *Play of Love* is a good example of the dramatic debate of a popular question. Heywood's association with the Children of Paul's through the 1550's tempts one to speculate that his forms and devices were perpetuated in the boys' repertoire. See Hunter, p.122.

form in *Endimion* in which one character rehearses both sides of his or her dilemma in search of a solution or decision. For example, Endimion compares Tellus and Cynthia in II.3:

> No rest *Endimion*? still vncertaine how to settle thy steps by day, or thy thoughts by night? ... O *Endimion, Tellus* was faire, but what auaileth Beautie without wisedome? Nay, *Endimion*, she was wise, but what auaileth wisdome without honour? Shee was honourable *Endimion*, belie her not, I but howe obscure is honor without fortune? Was she not fortunate whome so many followed? Yes, yes, but base is fortune without Maiestie: thy Maiestie *Cynthia* al the world knoweth and wondereth at, but not one in the world that can immitate it, or comprehend it. No more *Endimion*!
> (II.3.1-18)

Paradoxically the logical progressions of this speech lead up to the notion of incomprehensibility: the verbal structure implies that love cannot be reached by logical thought.

In a similarly formal fashion Eumenides weighs the responsibilities of love and friendship in III.4:

> Shall I not hazard the losse of a friend, for the obtayning of her for whome I woulde often loose my selfe? Fonde *Eumenides*, shall the intycing beautie of a most disdainfull Ladie, bee of more force then the rare fidelitie of a tryed friend? The loue of men to women is a thing common and of course: the friendshippe of man to man infinite and immortall. Tush, *Semele* dooth possesse my loue. I, but *Endimion* hath deserued it. I will helpe *Endimion*. I founde *Endimion* vnspotted in his trueth. I, but I shall finde *Semele* constant in her loue. I will haue *Semele*. What shall I doe?
> (III.4.111-119)

The balanced phrases of Eumenides' speech do not in fact lead to a decision: in the end Eumenides asks Geron to decide for him. These solus "debates" obviously present themes that are relevant to the intellectual scheme of the play, and this thematic function may be their primary purpose, but nevertheless Lyly couches the ideas in dramatic representations of individual thought processes.[22] The positions taken within the soliloquies are conventional, but they contain as much in the way of psychological insight as one is likely to find in Lyly.

Psychology is a curious commodity in *Endimion*'s characterization, however. The characters whose individual passions and thoughts have the greatest dramatic emphasis are characterized with the most formal and unnatural language of the play. Eumenides' dilemma between love and friendship in III.4 calls on extreme emotions,

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22. See Jonas A. Barish, "The Prose Style of John Lyly", *English Literary History* 23 (1956) 14-35, p.24.

yet they are expressed in the measured, intellectual contrasts of Euphuism. The balance between the "intycing beautie of a most disdainfull Ladie" and the "rare fidelitie of a tryed friend" is almost too successful; its intellectual neatness places Eumenides' character in an emotional impasse which belies his stated passion. He cannot choose for himself and turns instead to Geron: "What shall I doe? Father, thy gray haires are Embassadours of experience. Which shall I aske?" (III.4.119-121). That Geron actually makes Eumenides' decision for him seems to render the character impotent; his subsequent words seem to be only the moralistic filigree of *Euphues*:

> Vertue shall subdue affections, wisdome lust, friendship beautie. Mistresses are in euery place, and as common as Hares in Atho, Bees in Hybla, foules in the ayre: but friends to be founde, are like the Phoenix in Arabia, but one, or the Philadelphi in Arays, neuer aboue two.
> (III.4.142-147)

When in Act V it is necessary to revive Eumenides' role as a lover he returns to phrases of passion -- "nowe are my sparkes growne to flames, and my fancies almost to frenzies" (V.1.160-161) -- but they are no longer convincing.

Much more crucial to the play's story is the passion of Tellus. The first speech of I.2 draws the character in a ranting passion:

> Trecherous and most periured *Endimion*, is *Cynthia* the sweetnes of thy life, and the bitternes of my death? What reuenge may be deuised so full of shame, as my thoughts are replenished with mallice? Tell me *Floscula* if falsenes in loue can possibly be punished with extremitiie of hate. As long as sworde, fire, or poison may be hyred, no traytor to my loue shall liue vnreuenged.
> (I.2.1-6)

Tellus' fury leads her directly to a plan for revenge, making her an unusually active Lylian character. Her language confirms her active malice, although it often takes the form of self-narration, as in these examples:

> Hee shall knowe the mallice of a woman, to haue neither meane, nor ende; and of a woman deluded in loue, to haue neither rule, nor reason.
> (I.2.52-54)

> Vnhappie *Tellus*, whose desires are so desperate, that they are neither to be conceiued of any creature, nor to be cured by any arte.
> (I.4.29-31)

In III.1 Tellus is punished for her words alone. Her plot against Endimion remains hidden, although its motivating fury comes out in her spiteful remarks: "As good sleepe and doe no harme, as wake and doe no good" (III.1.6-7). III.2 returns to direct statements about Tellus' emotional state: "there is no sweeter musicke to the miserable

then dispayre; and therefore the more bitternesse I feele, the more sweetnes I find" (III.2.11-13). But it is Tellus' soliloquy in IV.1 in which Lyly draws the most complex psychological portrait of the play, juxtaposing the character's conflicting passions:

> I Maruell *Corsites* giueth me so much libertie: ... it may bee hee is in loue with mee, for (*Endimion*, excepted) what is he that is not enamourd of my beautie? But what respectest thou the loue of all the world? *Endimion* hates thee. Alas poore *Endimion*, my malyce hath exceeded my loue: and thy faith to *Cynthia* quenched my affections. Quenched *Tellus*? nay kindled them a fresh; in so much that I finde scorching flames for dead embers, and cruell encounters of warre in my thoughtes, in steede of sweete parlees. Ah that I might once againe see *Endimion*! accursed girle, what hope hast thou to see *Endimion*? on whose head already are growne gray haires, and whose life must yeelde to Nature before *Cynthia* ende her displeasure. Wicked *Dipsas*, and most deuilish *Tellus*, the one for cunning too exquisit, the other for hate too intollerable.
> (IV.1.1-18)

The contrasting uses of first- and second-person address convey Tellus' conflicting passions of love and despair; her character seems to be split in two. Notably, this soliloquy is constructed on emotional logic instead of syntactical symmetry: one thought leads naturally to its emotional inversion. Lyly's premise seems to be that Tellus' earthly character justifies her extreme passions, her "earthly motions" (V.3.76), as opposed to Cynthia's celestial serenity. In her confession in Act V Tellus describes her love in terms of physical symptoms:

> Feeling a continuall burning in all my bowels, and a bursting almost in euerie vaine, I could not smoother the inwarde fyre, but it must needes bee perceiued by the outwarde smoke; and by the flying abroade of diuers sparkes, diuers iudged of my scalding flames.
> (V.3.98-102)[23]

The meaning of Tellus' character resides in this raw, uncontrollable passion; the character's emotional language manifests this essence.

The language of Endimion's character rests somewhere between the passionate outbursts of Tellus and the balanced phrases of Eumenides. Considerable portions of Endimion's scenes in Acts I and II are given over to declarations of his love for Cynthia; yet although these speeches are fervent, they generally stay within the

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23. Spenser characterizes Britomart with a similarly painful passion in *The Faerie Queene*:

> "...it hath infixed faster hold
> Within my bleeding bowels, and so sore
> Now ranckleth in this same fraile fleshly mould,
> That all mine entrails flow with poysnous gore,
> And th'vlcer groweth daily more and more;"

Book III, Canto ii, Stanza 39; see also Stanza 52. Edmund Spenser, *Poetical Works*, edited by J. C. Smith and E. De Selincourt (Oxford, 1912, reprinted 1970), p.323.

balanced forms of Euphuism. The first big speech in I.1 consists of a rather intellectual defense of the paradox that change can exist within constancy, as exhibited in the waxing and waning of the moon:

> O fayre Cynthia, why doe others terme thee vnconstant, whom I haue euer founde vnmoueable? ... Flowers in theyr buds are nothing worth till they be blowne, nor blossomes accounted till they be ripe fruite: and shal we then say they be changeable, for that they growe from seedes to leaues, from leaues to buds, from buds to theyr perfection? then, why be not twigs that become trees, children that become men, and Mornings that grow to Euenings, termed wauering, for that they continue not at one stay?
> (I.1.30-45)

Endimion's soliloquy in II.1 restates his worship of Cynthia in a series of questions and answers proving his genuine status as a lover:

> Sweet Cynthia, how wouldst thou be pleased, how possessed? wil labours (patient of all extremities) obtaine thy loue? There is no Mountain so steepe that I will not climbe, no monster so cruell that I will not tame, no action so desperate that I will not attempt. Desirest thou the passions of loue, the sad and melancholie moodes of perplexed mindes, the not to be expressed torments of racked thoughts? Beholde my sad teares, my deepe sighes, my hollowe eyes, my broken sleepes, my heauie countenaunce. Wouldst thou haue mee vowde onelie to thy beautie? and consume euerie minute of time in thy seruice? remember my solitarie life, almost these seauen yeeres: whom haue I entertained but mine owne thoughts, and thy vertues?
> (II.1.4-15)

In this speech Lyly invokes the conventional postures of love. The "labours" he suggests recall a medieval, chivalric notion of physical tests to prove the true lover. The "passions" link Endimion to a Renaissance position of the melancholy lover, a

commonplace characterization originating in the Petrarchan conceit of the lover as sufferer.[24] Endimion continues in Petrarchan vein with his vows of solitary service and devotion; he even employs the Italianate pretense of a false love to screen the true affection he feels:

> With *Tellus*, faire *Tellus*, haue I dissembled, vsing her but as a cloake for mine affections, that others seeing my mangled and disordered minde, might thinke it were for one that loueth me, not for *Cynthia*, whose perfection alloweth no companion, nor comparison.
> (II.1.22-26)[25]

But eventually Lyly finds expression for Endimion's devotion in the opposing Euphuistic conceits of his fantastic natural history:

> I am none of those Wolues, that barke most when thou shinest brightest; but that fish (thy fish *Cynthia* in the floode Araris) which at thy waxing is as white as the driuen snowe, and at thy waning, as blacke as deepest darknes.
> (II.1.30-33)

Endimion's character is silenced by sleep throughout Acts III and IV. When he awakes he engages in direct conversation with his adored Cynthia for the first time, but he now uses the graceful, if unemotional language of the court. On waking, he says, "... onely diuine *Cynthia*, to whom time, fortune, destinie, & death, are subiect, I see and remember, and in all humilitie I regard and reuerence" (V.1.55-57). He expands on his feelings for his queen in V.2:

> The time was Madam, and is, and euer shall be, that I honoured your highnesse aboue all the world; but to stretch it so far as to call it loue, I neuer durst. ... Such a difference hath the Gods sette between our states, that all must be dutie, loyaltie, and reuerence; nothing (without it vouchsafe your highnes) be termed loue.
> (V.2.162-170)

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24. By Lyly's day this characterization was common onstage as well as in literature; see, for example, the link between Edward's visible melancholy and his identification as a lover in the first scene of Greene's Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay.

25. Compare this with Dante's "screen" for his love for Beatrice: "...between us, in direct line with my vision, there sat another lady of very pleasing appearance who looked at me repeatedly, astonished by my gaze, which seemed directed at her. A number of people observed this and soon began to draw conclusions ... Then I was greatly reassured, feeling confident that my gaze had not revealed my secret to anyone that day. It was then I hit on the idea of making this lady a screen to hide the truth ... and to make it the more convincing I wrote a few little things for her in rhyme..." Dante Alighieri, *La Vita Nuova*, translated by Barbara Reynolds (Harmondsworth, 1969), p.34.

	I.1	I.2	I.3	I.4	II.1	II.2	II.3	III.1	III.2	III.3	III.4	IV.1	IV.2	IV.3	V.1	V.2	V.3	no. scenes
ENDIMION	X				X		X								X		X	5
EUMENIDES	X							X			X				X		X	5
TELLUS		X		X	X			X	X			X					X	7
FLOSCULA		X		X										X	X		X	5
DARES			X			X				X			X		X	X		5
SAMIAS			X			X				X			X		X	X		5
SIR TOPHAS			X			X				X						X	X	5
EPITON			X			X				X			X			X		5
DIPSAS				X			X										X	3
SCINTILLA						X												1
FAVILLA						X												1
BAGOA							X										X	2
CYNTHIA								X						X	X		X	4
SEMELE								X						X	X		X	4
CORSITES								X	X			X		X			X	5
ZONTES								X						X	X?		X	4
PANELION								X						X	X		X	4
GERON											X						X	2
CONSTABLE													X					1
1 WATCH													X					1
2 WATCH													X					1
FAIRIES														X				1
PYTHAGORAS														X			X	2
GYPTES														X			X	2

Figure 5
Endimion
Scene-Character Grid

CHARACTER	BOUND	FREE	STATIC	DYNAMIC
ENDIMION	B			D
EUMENIDES	B		S	
TELLUS	B			D
FLOSCULA		F	S	
DARES		F	S	
SAMIAS		F	S	
SIR TOPHAS		F		D
EPITON		F	S	
DIPSAS	B			D
SCINTILLA		F	S	
FAVILLA		F	S	
BAGOA	(B)			D
CYNTHIA	B		S	
SEMELE	(B)			D
CORSITES	B			D
ZONTES		F	S	
PANELION		F	S	
GERON	B		S	
CONSTABLE		F	S	
1 WATCH		F	S	
2 WATCH		F	S	
FAIRIES		F	S	
PYTHAGORAS		F	S	
GYPTES		F	S	

Figure 6
Endimion
Characters in Relation to Narrative

In short Lyly (or Endimion) has censored the yearning emotions of love that were established in the language of Acts I and II. The psychology of the character is disrupted, but the compliment to Queen Elizabeth is rendered intact.

Lyly's individual characterizations in *Endimion*, therefore, hint occasionally at psychological depth but cannot sustain true inner conflict. The passions of his main characters are abruptly dismissed when Lyly finds them inconvenient for his plotting. Eumenides' dilemma between love and friendship conjures up an illusion of an emotional "life" for the character, but it is sacrificed first to a conventional misogynist eulogy of male friendship which undermines the second convention of love for a "cruel fair". Tellus is consistently depicted in the first four acts as a figure of uncontrollable physical passion which leads her headlong into action she subsequently regets; yet she meekly agrees "most willingly" (V.3.245) to Cynthia's suggestion that she marry Corsites. And Endimion's besotted love for the Moon is eradicated into a courtier's polite reverence for his queen. Consistent depiction of complex personalities seems to be too much for Lyly; no sooner has he established individuality than he deflates it with imposed conventions.

Lyly's characterization operates more often by defining groups of characters rather than individuals. Pairs, trios, even quartets of characters with identical functions populate all of Lyly's plays; he is fascinated with symmetry and balance in his plotting. For example, *Gallathea* contains two shepherd fathers and two beautiful daughters that must be disguised as boys. *Love's Metamorphosis* opposes three lovesick foresters with three contrary nymphs. *Mother Bombie* takes mathematical symmetry to an extreme and produces four fathers, each with a marriageable child, and four pert pages. By comparison, the primary characters of *Endimion* operate as individuals, although Lyly provides ample symmetry in their relationships and fates. But most of the minor characters do function in definite groups: they have similar or identical social roles, allegiances, styles of expression, actions, and fates. (See Figures 5 and 6.) The pages are an obvious example. Dares and Samias are an inseparable pair, and in II.1 they play opposite another pair, Scintilla and Favilla. In the second part of III.3 and in IV.1 Dares and Samias form a singing trio with the third page, Epiton (in other scenes

Epiton is differentiated by his particular relationship with Sir Tophas), and in IV.1 they challenge another, adult trio in the forms of the Constable and the two Watchmen. Zontes and Panelion are another indistinguishable duo, as are Pythagoras and Gyptes. All of these sets of characters are free from narrative responsibilities, and their inclusion in the play is clearly not motivated by an interest in individual characterization *per se*. Therefore we may look for more theatrical explanations. The visual potential of staging this reduplicative organization is rich; one can imagine the prettiness of similar costumes and the elegance of parallel movements on the stage. In IV.3, for example, Cynthia consults Pythagoras and Gyptes about Endimion's condition; the two philosophers tend to speak in turn, expressing very similar ideas, and presumably their movements would be likewise symmetrical.

CYNTHIA.
Pythagoras and *Gyptes*, what thinke you of *Endimion*? what reason is to be giuen, what remedie?
PYTHAGORAS.
Madame it is impossible to yeeld reason for things that happen not in compasse of nature. It is most certaine, that some strange enchauntment hath bound all his sences.
CYNTHIA.
What say you, *Gyptes*?
GYPTES.
With *Pythagoras*, that it is enchauntment, and that so strange that no Arte can vndoe it, for that heauines argueth a mallice vnremooueable in the Enchauntresse; and that no power can ende it, till shee die that did it, or the heauens shew some meanes more then miraculous.
(IV.3.137-148)

(I imagine them on either side of Cynthia as she addresses them in turn.) The artfulness of balanced groupings of figures on the stage is a hallmark of the courtly idiom, echoing the elaborate arrangements of the royal entertainments like that at Kenilworth, and anticipating the balletic patterns of the court masques in the seventeeth century.

The single figures of the play engage in the reduplicative organization through parallel and repeated behaviours. As mentioned earlier, Endimion, Eumenides, Corsites, Tellus, and Sir Tophas all suffer the pangs of unrequited love, which act upon them in similar ways. In I.1 Endimion confesses his mad devotion to his sceptical friend, Eumenides; in I.2 Lyly repeats the scene as Tellus describes her passion to her confidante, Floscula. Endimion's praise of Cynthia's virtues in I.1 is repeated in

parodic form in Sir Tophas' catalogue of Dipsas' charms in III.3. Endimion's enchanted sleep is reflected in the "sleeping in love" of Sir Tophas, who "would faine take a nap for fortie or fiftie yeeres" (IV.2), and in Corsites' magical sleep and deformity at the hands of the fairies (IV.3). Both Endimion and Sir Tophas remember portentous dreams when they awake (V.1 and III.3). The multiple marriages of Act V extend the repeated patterns; some critics have taken seriously the imperfections of the pairings and concluded that this too is part of Lyly's pattern.[26] By using these repeated actions Lyly sets up a differential characterization of the main figures: the characters are defined as much by their differences from other characters in similar circumstances as by individual descriptions.

G. K. Hunter describes the rationale for these oppositions:

> ... in order to show the virtue of the goddess [Lyly] has to depict an alternative love (to play the Venus to her Sapho, so to speak) and this produces the central design of Endimion between the moon and the earth, Cynthia and Tellus, his higher and lower destinies. Further, if he is to show Tellus as worthy of love, though unequal to Cynthia, he has to counter Endimion's rejection by another man's zealous pursuit, and this introduces Corsites. The whole play can be built up in this way as a functional development of a desire to flatter the Queen.[27]

Peter Weltner sees the differential plots and character relations as emphasizing the Lylian paradox of multiplicity within unity:

> So the play also includes Sir Tophas and Dipsas as the mirror images of Endymion and Cynthia: the bright goddess reflects herself in the black saint. ... The parodically perfect subplot both negates and confirms the values of the main plot and establishes the antinomic structure underlying the whole play.[28]

Such symmetrical plotting obviously demonstrates a theatrical aesthetic of artifice rather than "realism" or "naturalism". It is the ingenuity of the artistic construction that pleases, not its verisimilitude to real life. Within this aesthetic the audience is expected to view the piece with appreciative detachment rather than empathy. Peter Berek writes, "Lyly uses stylized language and elaborately patterned narrative to keep the audience emotionally distant from his plot and characters;" he suggests that emotional involvement would spoil the audience's pleasure, that the audience would not feel satisfied by the play's arbitrary ending if they believed in the

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26. Best, p.80-81. Houppert, p.106.
27. Hunter, p.189.
28. Peter Weltner, "The Antinomic Vision of Lyly's *Endymion*", *English Literary Renaissance* 3 (1973) 5-29, p.10.

characters as people with genuine emotional needs.[29] The fact that the characters were played by children would have increased the audience's detachment. There would have been an immediate visual disparity between the images of the child actors and the meanings of the queens and courtiers they represented, an inescapable reminder that all was artificial. The boys' styles of acting seem to have been generally unemotional, employing formal declamation for serious moments of dignity, and tended to emphasize the duality of actor and character.[30] (Some evidence of this self-conscious theatricality exists in the boys' scripts, as in *Endimion*'s references to the small size of Dares and Samias, who must have been played by the smallest boys in the company.)[31] Performance practices like casting, therefore, complement the structural arrangements in a dramatic form which prohibits an emotional identification with the characters.

This begs the question, what does the character device signify in Lyly's comedy? Jocelyn Powell is "constantly aware of the characters of the drama as part of the intellectual pattern ... The characters themselves, and the human characteristics of their roles, become instances and metaphors."[32] Reavley Gair likewise feels that "Lyly's characters are not so much persons as intellectual vehicles, a movement into rather than away from symbol."[33] These comments recognize a Lylian preoccupation with the metaphorical function of the character device itself, its ability to make one thing (the actor) mean something else (the character). This fascination recalls Lyly's recurring theme of metamorphosis, in its literal transformation of character meaning;[34] it also suggests the Euphuistic device of paradox, which forces meaning into unlikely or unexpected forms.[35] Lyly's emphasis on the mechanics of signification in the character device (through an insistence on artifice and an unsympathetic performance style) makes the audience immediately conscious of the character as an intellectual sign

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29. Peter Berek, "Artifice and Realism in Lyly, Nashe, and *Love's Labor's Lost*", *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900* 23 (1983) 207-221, pp.208,210.
30. Hunter, p.94. Shapiro, pp.116-117.
31. Donald Edge, "Classical-Comical Prosody and Proportion in John Lyly's *Endimion*", *Notes and Queries* 229 (1984) 178-179.
32. Powell, p.165.
33. Gair, p.102.
34. "The metamorphoses enlarge the scope of human change available for expression by an artist without any means of showing psychological development in a character; they allow him to explore human capacity for regression and obsession and other aspects of the mind ... and allow him to do so in a way which is at once spectacular and just." Hunter, p.132.
35. Barish, p.21.

and aware of its own acts of interpretation. This in turn leads to a search for veiled character meanings; decoding has been the fate of *Endimion* in Lyly's own day and in ours. Michael Best paraphrases the historical impulse to interpret the figures of *Endimion* outside the narrative context as "we clearly do not have a character, so perhaps we have an abstraction."[36] In the following pages we shall see that the characterization of *Endimion* relies more upon the spectator's act of interpreting than upon any single interpretation.

Many critics have elucidated various and conflicting meanings from the characters of *Endimion*, particularly in the form of topical allusions to Lyly's contemporaries. Lyly seems to have anticipated their impulse, apparently the same as that of his courtly audience, in his Prologue to *Endimion*:

> It was forbidden in olde time to dispute of Chymera, because it was a fiction: we hope in our times none will apply pastimes, because they are fancies; for there liveth none under the Sunne that knows what to make of the Man in the Moone.

Some scholars, like Percy Long, have taken this seriously to mean that there is no veiled premise to find;[37] others join David Stevenson in his view that "the Elizabethan audience could scarcely have failed to look for hidden significances in *Endimion*, since it was warned not to do so by the author in his prologue."[38] In any case *Endimion*'s readers have described and interpreted an assortment of allegorical systems.

First, this tale of the Man in the Moon attempts to present the moon itself in the character of Cynthia: the human form on the stage "means" the physical body of the moon, which waxes and wanes and controls various natural forces on earth. Lyly presents this meaning in verbal references to Cynthia in Acts I and II, before bringing her on in person in III.1. For instance, Endimion outlines the lunar virtues of his mistress in I.1:

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36. Best, p.76.
37. Percy W. Long, "The Purport of Lyly's *Endimion*", *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* 24 (1909) 164-184.
38. David Lloyd Stevenson, *The Love-Game Comedy* (New York, 1946), p.159. Halpin puts forward a similar theory: "Indeed, the faint denial of personalities in the prologue is but the temptation to arouse curiosity to a diligent search for a secret ready to transpire; whilst the unaffected fears of the epilogue are a manifest betrayal of the author's consciousness that he had provoked hostility." Rev. N. J. Halpin, *Oberon's Vision in the Midsummer Night's Dream, Illustrated by a comparison with Lylie's Endymion* (London, 1843), p.51.

> O fayre *Cynthia*, why doe others terme thee vnconstant, whom I haue euer founde vnmoueable? Iniurious tyme, corrupt manners, vnkind men, who finding a constancy not to be matched in my sweete Mistris, haue christned her with the name of wauering, waxing, and waning. Is she inconstant that keepeth a setled course, which since her first creation altereth not one minute in her mouing? ... What thing (my Mistris excepted) being in the pride of her beauty, & latter minute of her age, that waxeth young againe? Tell mee *Eumenides*, what is hee that hauing a Mistris of ripe yeeres, & infinite vertues, great honors, and vnspeakable beauty, but woulde wish that shee might grow tender againe? getting youth by yeeres, and neuer decaying beauty by time, whose fayre face, neyther the Summers blase can scorch, nor Winters blast chappe, nor the numbering of yeeres breede altering of colours. Such is my sweete *Cynthia*, whom tyme cannot touch, because she is diuine ...
> (I.1.30-57)[39]

After Cynthia enters and takes action the lunar references drop away and the character operates more as a queen than as the physical moon.

Lyly continues this system of physical allegory with Tellus, who represents the earth; Floscula, a "floweret", in attendance on Tellus; and Favilla and Scintilla, the "flame" and "spark". The opposition of moon and earth is encapsulated in the following dialogue from I.2:

> **TELLUS.**
> No comparison *Floscula*? and why so? is not my beauty diuine, whose body is decked with faire flowers, and vaines are Vines, yeelding sweet liquor to the dullest spirits, whose eares are Corne, to bring strength, and whose heares are grasse, to bring abundance? Doth not Frankinsence and Myrrhe breath out of my nostrils, and all the sacrifice of the Gods breede in my bowels? Infinite are my creatures, without which neyther thou, nor *Endimion*, nor any could loue, or liue.
> **FLOSCULA.**
> But know you not fayre Ladie, that *Cynthia* gouerneth all things? Your grapes would be but drie huskes, your Corne but chaffe, and all your vertues vaine, were it not *Cynthia* that preserueth the one in the bud, and nourisheth the other in the blade, and by her influence both comforteth all things, and by her authoritie commaundeth all creatures.
> (I.2.19-32)

Tellus' characterization combines human passions and actions along with her geomorphic attributes from her first introduction in Act I, but, like Cynthia's character, her physical significance diminishes as the play continues.[40] Lyly carries on a much more sustained and successful planetary allegory in *The Woman in the Moon*, which

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39. Violet Jeffery notes the precedence for such a conceit in the Italian sonnets entitled *Endimione* by Benedetto Gareth, also known as Il Cariteo, which describe Endimione's spiritual, platonic love for a unique, cold, chaste lady whom he addresses as La Luna (perhaps in reference to Joan of Aragon, then Queen of Naples). Violet M. Jeffery, *John Lyly and the Italian Renaissance* (Paris, 1928, reprinted 1969), pp.95-96.
40. Bond, III, p.82.

would seem by its title to be conceived as a companion piece to *Endimion, or the Man in the Moon.*

Percy Long and Bernard Huppé have taken the physical symbols of this first level of allegory to mark a second, metaphysical system. Long employs a Platonic progression to explain the play: Endimion moves away from a love for Earthly Beauty (Tellus) to a devotion to Heavenly Beauty (Cynthia); Earthly Beauty uses the help of Sensual Love (Corsites) to try to get him back, but Heavenly Beauty enlists the aid of Honour (Eumenides). Long justifies this interpretation by comparing it with the Petrarchan position in vogue in Lyly's day of love for a high, inaccessible, beautiful lady. Endimion, as a courtier, grounds the metaphysical allegory in a courtly love idiom familiar to all.[41]

Huppé's interpretation adds a moral dimension to Long's allegorical system. In Huppé's eyes, Endimion abandons Earthly Passion (Tellus) for Virtuous Love (Cynthia); their respective champions are Physical Force (Corsites) and Faithfulness (Eumenides). Huppé admits that this framework is not altogether consistent with the play's details -- in particular, he is apprehensive about the marriage of the physical and moral allegories (the changeable moon is not the best symbol for virtue), and the ambiguous conclusion to Endimion's love.[42] (As in *Sapho and Phao*, a chaste subject-queen relationship is offered for a resolution instead of the traditional comic union of lovers.[43]) Paul Olson clarifies this allegory by interpreting Endimion not as a literal courtier of fixed identity, as Huppé does, but as a symbol for the Rational Soul. Olson reinterprets Corsites as the Body and reads his marriage to Tellus, Earthly Passion, as a metaphor for the sexual appetite.[44]

The Endymion myth had already been employed by the sixteenth-century Italian Neoplatonists to symbolize the soul's mystical union with God through rapturous contemplation of the highest manifestation of the divine (the Moon/the Lady). Lyly might have received this interpretation of the myth through the works of Giulio Camillo

41. Long, pp.178-179,182,184.
42. Bernard F. Huppé, "Allegory of Love in Lyly's Court Comedies", *English Literary History* 14 (1947) 93-113.
43. Shapiro, p.175.
44. Paul A. Olson, "*A Midsummer Night's Dream* and the Meaning of Court Marriage" *English Literary History* 24 (1957) 95-119.

and Celio Curione or, most immediately, from Giordano Bruno's *De gli eroici furori*, which was published in England in 1585.[45]

J. A. Bryant, Peter Saccio, and Carolyn Ruth Swift take metaphysical allegory one step further by interpreting *Endimion* as a specifically Christian allegory. Bryant's is the loosest interpretation of the three; he does not regard Lyly's allegory as strictly emblematic but sees it instead as a "trick mirror" which reflects an assortment of images and analogies back onto the central fable. However Bryant is certain that the play's denoument is not one of Platonic identification but rather one of Christian mercy, truth, and justice.[46] Saccio develops this idea by applying medieval iconography to identify the three women of Endimion's dream as Truth (with the looking-glass and knife), Justice (stern-faced), and Mercy (lamenting). He also associates these figures thematically with the play's named characters: Tellus, who has been deceived, corresponds with Truth; Dipsas, her helper, acts out Justice; and Mercy might be either Floscula or Bagoa. Saccio also locates these qualities in the medieval allegorical characterizations of the Four Daughters of God: Truth, Justice, Mercy, and Peace. Cynthia assimilates all four divine attributes by exposing Tellus to truth, bringing Dipsas to justice, hushing the wrangling Semele into peace, and showing mercy to all; thus Cynthia's court and rule mirrors God's heavenly kingdom.[47] Saccio believes that the gradual expansion of the characters' metaphorical significance is the master plan for *Endimion*, which he calls "more a contemplation than a comedy", and for Lylian dramaturgy generally.[48]

Carolyn Swift takes account of the occasion for the performance, Candlemas Day, to justify her Christian reading of *Endimion*. Candlemas, she writes, "became in Protestant England a celebration of human aspiration to purity and to the highest

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45. C. C. Gannon, "Lyly's *Endimion*: From Myth to Allegory", *English Literary Renaissance* 6 (1976) 220-243, 224-228. Violet Jeffery contends that Lyly's use of Italian models typically reflects "a desire to be fashionable rather than profound;" his display of Italian-styled neoplatonism in *Euphues* "reveals rather a desire to show himself well-acquainted with such theories and opinions, than any sincere belief in them." Jeffery, p.49.
46. J. A. Bryant, "Nature of the Allegory in Lyly's *Endymion*" *Renaissance Papers* 3 (1956) 4-11, 7-9.
47. Saccio, pp.176-185.
48. Saccio, p.186.

possible knowledge -- knowledge of God."[49] She therefore reads *Endimion* as a metaphor for the quest and attainment of divine wisdom amidst an otherwise incomprehensible, mutable, uncertain world. Swift suggests that Lyly intentionally makes the play paradoxical and obscure in order to point the difficulty of discerning truth on earth: characters are not what they seem, realities of space and time collapse, language is deceitful and unstable. Confusion and inspiration are polarized in the figures of Tellus and Cynthia; they "aid Endimion's intellectual advancement by a dialectical movement similar to that of image and counterimage in Platonism and Neoplatonism."[50] Endimion becomes spiritually older and wiser through his experiences and eventually achieves an understanding of God's plan (as demonstrated by Cynthia's application of truth, justice, and mercy) "because he has obtained the renewed purity and clarity of mind asked for in the Collect of Candlemas."[51]

The metaphysical allegories suggested by Long, Huppé, Olson, and Saccio recall those of the morality plays. The morality was in decline in the 1580s but had certainly been the most widespread and vigorous theatrical form of the century. Although Shapiro tells us that moralities were rarely played at court by the children's companies, Lyly's audience would have had no trouble following a moral or metaphysical allegory set before them.[52] Sallie Bond sees morality conventions as directly compatible with the play's courtly idiom, "with Endimion functioning as Everycourtier, hoping to form an alliance with Sovereign's Favor while avoiding the company of Suspicion and Jealousy."[53] However, in the morality the identification of a character with its abstract value is usually explicit, whereas in *Endimion* it is oblique, if not invisible.[54] Of course a theatre audience has access to a wider range of clues to a character's identity than a reader does; visual means may have linked *Endimion*'s

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49. Carolyn Ruth Swift, "The Allegory of Wisdom in Lyly's *Endimion*," in *Drama in the Renaissance*, edited by Clifford Davidson, C. J. Gianakaris, and John H. Stroupe, AMS Studies in the Renaissance, 12 (New York, 1986), pp.61-83, p.61.
50. Swift, p.72.
51. Swift, p.79.
52. Shapiro, p.153.
53. Sallie Bond, "John Lyly's *Endimion*," *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900* 24 (1974) 189-199, 189.
54. Schelling imagines, "To men who remembered the moralities and beheld allegorical figures in every masque and triumph at court, the dramatic allegories of Lyly, disencumbered as they are from the old abstractions, must have seemed singularly free from artifice and significance, far-fetched, and strained." Felix E. Schelling, *Elizabethan Drama 1558-1642* (London, 1908), Vol.I, p.128.

characters with recognizable metaphysical iconography, as Bryant and Saccio suggest. But visual means, along with clever mimicry in the acting, may just as easily have identified the characters with contemporary Elizabethan figures.

Topical references constitute the allegory of *Endimion* in the eyes of many critics. All agree that the chaste, divine queen Cynthia is to be interpreted as a compliment to Elizabeth. Ralegh and Jonson also depicted their sovereign as Cynthia, and the identification would have been inevitable at a performance of *Endimion* before the Queen, especially when one considers certain passages:

> **ENDIMION.**
> The time was, Madam, and is, and euer shall be, that I honoured your highnesse aboue all the world; but to stretch it so far as to call it loue, I neuer durst. ... I haue forsaken all other fortunes to followe *Cynthia*, and heere I stande ready to die if it please *Cynthia*. Such a difference hath the Gods sette between our states, that all must be dutie, loyaltie, and reuerence...
> **CYNTHIA.**
> *Endimion*, this honorable respect of thine, shalbe christned loue in thee, & my reward for it fauor. Perseuer *Endimion* in louing me, & I account more strength in a true hart, then in a walled Cittie. I haue laboured to win all, and studie to keepe such as I haue wonne; but those that neither my fauour can mooue to continue constant, nor my offered benefits gette to bee faithfull. The Gods shal eyther reduce to trueth, or reuenge their trecheries with iustice.
> (V.3.162-186)

Although the relationship between Cynthia and Elizabeth seems straightforward, disagreement rages over the identities of her admirer, Endimion, and her jealous rival, Tellus. Halpin identifies Endimion as the Earl of Leicester and Tellus as his jilted second wife, Lady Douglas Howard, Countess of Sheffield.[55] Baker and Ward instead propose Leicester's third wife, Lady Lettice Knollys, Countess of Essex, as the model for Tellus on the grounds that it was this marriage that brought on Elizabeth's displeasure and caused Leicester to confine himself to Greenwich (Endimion's sleep on the lunary bank);[56] Brooke tries to support this reading with an anagrammatical reading of Tellus, Lletus, making a rather unconvincing pun on Lettice's name.[57] Bond takes Tellus as a more serious contender against Cynthia; he therefore identifies her as Mary Queen of Scots, continuing to carry on her plots in prison by tempting her gaoler (Sir

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55. Halpin, pp.59-61. Frederick S. Boas agrees that Endimion stands for Leicester in *Queen Elizabeth in Drama and Related Studies* (London, 1950), pp.20-21.
56. G. P. Baker, editor, *Lyly's Endimion* (New York, 1894), pp.xli-lxxiv. A. W. Ward, *A History of English Dramatic Literature*, second edition (London, 1899), Vol.I, p.291.
57. C. F. Tucker Brooke, "The Allegory in Lyly's *Endimion*," *Modern Language Notes* 26 (1911) 12-15, 14.

Amyas Paulet).[58] Feuillerat expands this notion by equating Endimion with James VI of Scotland, Mary's son;[59] Gray rejects the rather complicated assumptions about mother love which Feuillerat's suggestion conjures up, and instead identifies Endimion as Lord Henry Howard, a one-time wooer of Mary.[60] Josephine Bennett calls into question the identification of Endimion as Leicester by pointing out that Lyly enjoyed the patronage of the Earl of Oxford, that Oxford had arranged for the presentation of Lyly's first two plays, *Campaspe* and *Sapho and Phao*, and that Lyly would therefore be unlikely to write a play complimenting Oxford's enemy, Leicester, as the paragon of a courtier's devotion. Bennett suggests that Endimion stands for Oxford instead, and by examining Oxford's past she lands upon Anne Vavasor, his jilted and vengeful lover, as an identity for Tellus. In Bennett's interpretation the play constitutes an apology for Oxford, who was in royal disfavour for several years (the sleep) until Elizabeth reinstated him with the grant of a large pension (the kiss). The presentation of the play is thereby an elaborate expression of gratitude from Oxford to the Queen.[61]

The trouble with these contemporary interpretations is that they are rather general and derive from the play's situations instead of its characterizations. The correspondences that Bennett, Bond and the rest have drawn are historical rather than personal; their approach is to search for similar circumstances from which to elicit the appropriate personalities. Unfortunately quite a few people seem to have suffered from jilted love and royal disfavour in Elizabeth's court, and the selection of historical candidates for Lyly's sources is bound to be subjective. As Hunter remarks, such historical interpretation "relies on stiffening the play with romantic responses to history and so bypassing the appeal of the play as a play."[62] This method seems to forego the possibility that the characters derive from a dramatic or thematic logic. Morley calls it "hobbling Pegasus with legs of prose,"[63] and Hunter accuses, "None of these critics has asked, 'is the relationship between Cynthia, Endimion, and Tellus one that has any

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58. R. W. Bond, Vol.III, pp.89-94. See also J. D. Wilson, p.109.
59. Feuillerat, p.169.
60. Henry David Gray, "A Possible Interpretation of Lyly's *Endimion*," *Anglia* 39 (1916) 181-200, 189.
61. Josephine Waters Bennett, "Oxford and *Endimion*", *PMLA* 57 (1942) 354-369.
62. Hunter, p.191.
63. Henry Morley, *English Writers* (London, Paris, and Melbourne, 1892), Vol.IX, p.204.

dramatic or artistic justification?'"[64] Perhaps a more convincing method would be to examine textual characterization for evidence of an individual portrait, in description, verbal or stylistic idiosyncrasy, or emblematic imagery. Yet *Endimion* offers little in the way of such clues, so little that one wonders if it is possible to sustain a contemporary allegory.

Certainly the performers might have identified their characters with contemporary figures with deadly accuracy if they chose to do so, even without any textual justification. A walk, a lisp, a laugh, a gesture: all are telling details and would have been available to the Children of Paul's, who seem to have been known for their caricatures. Gabriel Harvey warned,

> ... all you, that tender the preseruation of your good names, were best to please Pap-hatchet, and see Euphues betimes, for feare lesse he be mooued, or some One of his Apes hired to make a Playe of you; and then is your credit quite vn-done for euer, and euer: Such is the publique reputation of their Playes.[65]

Jack Roberts confirms this reputation in his "Ironical Letter" of 1584 to Sir Roger Williams:

> I pray you take heed and beware of my Lord of Oxenfordes man called *Lyllie*, for if he see this letter, he will put it in print, or make the boys in *Poules* play it vppon astage.[66]

These warnings suggest that Lyly and his boys siezed upon topical material, also that Lyly had some control over the boys' performances. That they sketched the courtiers with a free hand implies the court's approval of or complicity with a topically allusive style,[67] for the Children of Paul's performed more regularly at court occasions than any other company during the 1580s.[68] Lyly and his boys had the tricky problem of judging who was an appropriate subject for their mimicry and how far they could go with their contemporary allusions without offending. For it was not Lyly's intention to criticize the court; his plays endorse the value and substance of Elizabeth's reign and

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64. Hunter, p.190.
65. Gabriel Harvey, *Works*, edited by Alexander B. Grosart, (London, 1884), Vol.II, p.213.
66. Bodl. MS.Tanner 169, fols.69v-70, first reprinted by F. P. Wilson in "An Ironicall Letter", *Modern Language Review* 15 (1920) 79-82, 82.
67. Alfred Harbage remarks, "If, as seems probable, *Endymion* actually adumbrates a recent imbroglio of treachery, adultery, and bloodshed among the socially eminent, imperturbably whitewashing the principals, we must postulate an oddly indoctrinated audience." Harbage, *Shakespeare and the Rival Traditions* (New York, 1952, reprinted 1968), p.70.
68. Hillebrand, p.142.

her relationships with her courtiers. Alexander, Sapho, Diana, and especially Cynthia are noble, virtuous, magnanimous rulers. Lyly is not employing topical references in critical satire in the Jonsonian style, suggesting the faults of his targets by exposing the flaws of his characters. But can the complimentary relations of Alexander and Hephaestion, Sapho and Phao, or Endimion and Cynthia have inspired the warnings of Harvey and Roberts against Lyly's too observant eye? I think not; the flattering construction of these leading roles would ill support a satirical performance style. The minor roles, however, are ripe for actors' embellishments, and the free characters that on paper seem merely to be filling up the arithmetical patterns would instantly gain new meanings and humour if they suggested the familiar faces of courtly society. Such impersonations need not always have been satirical; it is flattering to be recognized, and a momentary imitation at the neutral hands of children, couched in the witty dialogues and graceful situations of Lyly's drama, might have been complimentary rather than cutting. This sort of flattering impersonation would, I think, have suited Lyly's comic aesthetic of "soft smiling", as well as his recurring emphasis on his audience's importance. Actorial impersonation would render this compliment literally.

In *Endimion* there are ample opportunities for such actorial characterizations: the sharp-tongued Semele, who seems thematically out of place in Cynthia's well-behaved court and narratively uncomfortable as the object of the faithful Eumenides' devotion, would have considerably more appeal to an audience who recognized in her the acerbic tongue of a familiar court lady. Likewise the role of Floscula, whose appreciation of Endimion's virtue has no narrative purpose, might have been a lovely compliment if performance made clear for whom it was intended. Bond comments, "Floscula's superfluousness to the action is some reason for supposing that she was not the mere creature of the author's brain, but had a definite original."[69] Panelion and Zontes could be transformed from ciphers to personalities, and even the peculiar presence of Pythagoras and Gyptes could become relevant. Halpin feels "convinced, from the importance of their names, contrasted with the *nothing* they have to do in the action, that ... [Pythagoras and Gyptes] were not introduced merely to fill up the

69. R. W. Bond, Vol.III, p.99.

theatrical pomp without any more dignity or significance."[70] It seems to me that the amusement created by children's imitations of well-known personalities would have pleased Elizabeth much more than an evocation of her own political struggles (as Bond's Mary Queen of Scots theory) or a suggestion of her intervention in the sometimes unseemly amours of her courtiers (the Leicester and Oxford theories). Elizabeth's displeasure at other contemporary representations of political action is well documented, but Lyly's plays remained in favour until 1590.[71]

Seen in this light the attempt to suggest contemporary identifications for minor characters may prove more satisfying than theories about Tellus and Endimion, although there is so little textual evidence that such identifications are speculative at best. In 1843 Halpin supposed that Eumenides represented the Earl of Sussex and Semele, Frances Sidney;[72] Bond offers another interpretation of Sir Philip Sidney and Penelope Devereux, Lady Rich (Sidney's "Stella").[73] Tucker Brooke identifies Eumenides as Lord Burleigh, Lyly's longtime patron;[74] and Gray sees Eumenides as Lyly himself.[75] Both Halpin and Bond, along with Schelling, associate Geron and Dipsas with the estranged Earl and Countess of Shrewsbury.[76] Lyly's characterization of Dipsas, especially in Sir Tophas' account, is so unflattering that if such a contemporary allusion *was* intended the tone of the actor's performance must certainly have been satirical and rather unkind.

> O what a fine thin hayre hath *Dipsas*! What a prettie low forehead! What a tall & statelie nose! What little hollowe eyes! What great and godly lypes! How harmlesse shee is beeing toothlesse! her fingers fatte and short, adorned with long nayles like a Bytter! In howe sweete a proportion her cheekes hang downe to her brests like dugges, and her pappes to her waste like bagges! What a lowe stature shee is, and yet what a great foote shee carryeth!
> (III.3.52-58)

Similarly the hapless Corsites is made to appear ridiculous on stage in IV.3 when he is pinched and "deformed" with the fairies' spots, which Bond says was the typical punishment in folklore for sensual affection.[77] If Corsites does not stand for Sensual

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70. Halpin, p.75.
71. See Hunter, pp.148-152; also Bond, Vol.III, pp.101-102.
72. Halpin, pp.60-62, 65-67.
73. R. W. Bond, Vol.III, p.95-96.
74. Brooke, p.15.
75. Gray, p.197.
76. R. W. Bond, Vol.III, pp.97-98. Halpin, pp.67-73. Schelling, Vol.I, pp.129-130.
77. R. W. Bond, Vol.III, p.83.

Affection in the abstract but instead recalls the foolishness of Sir Edward Stafford, Sir Amyas Paulet, or Sir Henry Lee, then the episode, irrelevant in terms of action, instantly has a satirical interest for an audience in the know.[78]

Sir Tophas is the most obvious figure of fun in *Endimion*; his verbal humour and parodic action alone give him comic interest, and the farcical performance style of the role is well documented in the script. Nonetheless he too has been associated with contemporary figures. Halpin suggests Stephen Gosson, and Bond puts forward Gabriel Harvey himself (in which case Harvey's warning of Lyly's predilection for mimicry would have been very well justified).[79] Sir Tophas would be an interesting candidate for contemporary identification because the character is individualized in the text to an extraordinary extent for Lyly, with both visual and verbal idiosyncrasy.[80] If Harvey were accepted as the "meaning" of Sir Tophas, could the textual characterization be construed as a specific portrait of Harvey? I shall consider the implications of such a characterization at greater length in the discussion below of Sir Tophas' theatrical pedigree; but if one accepts that the written character is in fact a caricature of a known individual, one may regard Sir Tophas as a prime example of a textual characterization shaped by and for performance practices.

Other minor character identifications are fairly flimsy because the script offers so little information. Bond suggests that Panelion and Zontes may represent Lord Burleigh and Sir Francis Walsingham, also that Bagoa may stand for the Countess of Lennox, although he admits that "the effort to identify every character may well be vain where so many lines in the maze of Court intrigue must have been effaced by time."[81] To be sure, all of these contemporary identifications are uncertain, and I do not allege, as Bond does, that the dramatic representation of contemporary figures necessarily entails a designed, allegorical representation of historical events or relationships in the play's action. Rather, I would suggest that the imitation of courtly personalities could exist independently of the play's main story, and that such imitation was largely

78. The interpretations of Halpin, R. W. Bond, and Bennett respectively. Bennett notes that Sir Henry Lee represented himself in a similarly unflattering way in the entertainments he devised for Elizabeth in 1592; obviously the embarrassment cannot have been too severe.
79. See above.
80. R. W. Bond, Vol.II, p.284.
81. R. W. Bond, Vol.III, p.99.

actorial, not textual. (This does not necessarily diminish Lyly's responsibility for the impersonations, since he seems to have had some control over the children's performances.) In her article, "John Lyly's *Endimion*," Sallie Bond makes a similar case for the inclusion of fictional court allegory in the play in references to actual, recognizable individuals without specific historical (or transhistorical) action. "These references are Lyly's witty incorporation of the 'real' courtiers (with details carefully confused) into the world of his play," she writes, thus allowing the courtiers the pleasure of seeing themselves in hypothetical circumstances.[82]

> The less pleasant aspects of court life, though recognizable in Endimion's plight, are treated vaguely enough to avoid trouble, and the self-conscious artifice invoked to keep the play and court worlds separate in the audience's mind seems to have successfully balanced the problem of too-truthful mirrors with the presumed desire of the court to see a play about itself.[83]

The script of *Endimion* seems to leave space for character embellishments instead of directing or documenting them; the very abstraction of the textual characterization hints that character meaning was established primarily in performance. We know that the Paul's boys indulged in contemporary references; momentary mimicry in the minor roles would have amused without seriously offending political ideology or disturbing the central, stable compliment to Elizabeth. As well, the diversion of imitation would have increased the audience's self-referentiality and flattered their sense of self-importance, always a major component of Lyly's court comedies. However, I would consider such imitations as individual and independent and therefore not truly allegorical.[84]

In *Endimion*, then, we can see allegory invading characterization on various levels: physical, metaphysical, Christian, and courtly. It is difficult, perhaps impossible to reconcile these elements into a consistent scheme of characterization. Various critics suggest that it would be wrong to do so. J. A. Bryant sees Lyly's character symbols as the scrambled shapes in a trick mirror showing "both the reflection of familiar images and a growing collection of new shapes and concatenations

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82. Sallie Bond, p.199.
83. Sallie Bond, p.197.
84. Judith Dundas tells us that Renaissance allegory comprised a deliberately contrived system of meaning. "Allegory as a Form of Wit", *Studies in the Renaissance* 11 (1964) 223-233, p.233.

of shapes, which has no existence anywhere save in the mirror itself;"[85] and Peter Weltner suggests that "the complexity of a symbol is lost in the simplicity of its reduction" in a strict allegorical correspondence.[86] J. Dover Wilson says simply, "Indistinction of character seems to be in keeping with an allegory of moonshine."[87] Yet the sheer complexity of Lyly's layers of meaning would have intrigued his audience. The Elizabethan court delighted in allegory with the pleasure of deciphering a riddle; intricacy, subtlety, and ambiguity add to the difficulty and thus to the ingenuity of the allegorical work.[88] (The tremendous popularity of *The Faerie Queene*, published only two years after *Endimion*'s court performance, attests to the fashion for multiple allegory.) Lyly's prose style, Euphuism, employs a similar tendency towards the ambiguous compression of meaning in its extensive use of paradox.[89] Duality of meaning is viable and desirable in this sophisticated allegorical idiom. Thus the Lylian character device does double duty in projecting various significances: a fictional person, a real contemporary person, a moral or metaphysical abstraction, a paradigm of courtly love.

It is important to note that only the first two of these potential meanings are actorial; the latter two are primarily interpretative and require the audience's associations and comparisons. Anne Lancashire comments that Lyly's formal conventions and devices require performance and their projected audience to assume their full beauty:

> Without the Queen's presence the plays ... are ironic or incomplete; they show on all levels a flawed, not golden world, full of erring mortals and capricious gods and without internal capacity for regeneration. ... Enter Elizabeth ... and the audience itself with the Queen as its centre becomes, as a political entity, the ordered, golden ideal: court over country, art over nature, masque over antimasque, Christianity over paganism, civilization over barbarism.[90]

To be sure *Endimion* offers a narrative fiction, witty dialogue, and theatrical display which the audience can apprehend and engage in directly. Yet Lyly's deliberate patterns demand a conscious recognition of their artificiality, and so entice the

85. Bryant, pp.5-6.
86. Weltner, p.5.
87. Wilson, p.110.
88. Dundas, pp.230-231.
89. Barish, p.21.
90. Anne Lancashire, "John Lyly and Pastoral Entertainment", in *The Elizabethan Theatre VIII*, edited by G. R. Hibbard (Port Credit, Ontario, 1982), pp.22-50, 48-49.

spectators into a heightened awareness of the processes of association by which they derive meanings (Bryant's "trick mirror").[91] Jocelyn Powell, conceiving Lyly's plays as elaborate courtiers' games, says, "The plays are not about the ideas expressed; they are about the faculties employed."[92] In *Endimion* Lyly's central theme of love is explored through the comparison of situations, not by a single narrative line, and it is up to the audience to make those comparisons. Audience participation is thus crucial to *Endimion*'s structure, and must necessarily inform the characterization as well. The allegorical character-readings suggested by many critics support this notion that Lyly's textual characterization reaches past the immediate fictional circumstances and actorial needs of performance and attempts to direct the audience's acts of reception.

To an extent, Lyly's emphasis on the audience amounts to a disregard for the details of the stage fiction. Inconsistencies and illogicalities run rampant in *Endimion*, although Lyly tries to excuse them in his prologue with his insistence that he presents a lunatic tale. His gross breaches of spatial and especially temporal unity suspend any conceivable "belief" in the story and its characters: for example, Endimion ages forty years in his enchanted sleep, but no one else seems to age at all. The motives and actions of the characters frequently do not add up. For instance, Lyly goes to some trouble to dramatize the passions of Tellus in Acts I and II, yet he sets Tellus' declaration that she has been wronged (I.2) *before* her test of Endimion's honesty (II.1), and the enchanted sleep that Dipsas puts on Endimion at Tellus' instigation in II.3 is not the service that Tellus requested from her in I.4. A generalized connection between characters' emotions and actions is made and is available for interpretation, but in the terms of a performed narrative, it lacks clarity and consistency.

However, there are exceptions to Lyly's intellectual scheme of character construction, and a few of *Endimion*'s free characters seem to be constructed expressly for performance. One is Bagoa, who is included primarily as an excuse for Lyly to repeat his favourite motif of metamorphosis and to use what seems to have been one of

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91. Bryant, p.5-6.
92. Powell, p.157.

his favourite stage effects, a trick tree.[93] Bagoa is quite unnecessary in assisting Dipsas in II.3 and then drops out of the play altogether until Act V, when we learn that she has exposed Tellus and Dipsas and has been turned into an aspen tree for her trouble. Thus Bagoa's only bound action, her incriminating disclosure, takes place offstage. The relegation of this necessary information to a second-hand report in the last act of the play betrays Lyly's lack of interest in its narrative importance; he is simply eager to get his tree onstage for its spectacular metamorphosis back into Bagoa in time for her to marry Sir Tophas. A tree is an important property in *Gallathea*, and Lyly included similar arboreal transformations in his later plays, *Love's Metamorphosis* and *The Woman in the Moon*, so the tree must have been terrifically impressive. Nonetheless Bagoa is an entirely arbitrary character; her ultimate match with Sir Tophas is pleasing for numerical symmetry, but scarcely necessary. The character is a justification for spectacle, and in it we can see Lyly writing purely theatrically, his intellectual interests quite forgotten.

The roles of the three pages, Dares, Samias, and Epiton, seem likewise to be governed by performance concerns. To begin with, they provide *Endimion*'s songs. T. W. Baldwin has shown how consistently Lyly includes roles for his best boy singers in his plays; they seem to have been a sure source of courtly pleasure.[94] In *Endimion* the pages sing a comic trio in III.3, and they join the Constable and the Watch for what seems to be a sextet in IV.2.[95] The absence of any narrative function for the pages or the watchmen supports the assumption that their characters are merely an excuse for some choice singing. However, the pages also appear in several non-singing scenes: I.3, II.2, V.2, and very briefly in V.1. These scenes consist of verbal wit, either for its own sake or at the expense of Sir Tophas. The witty dialogue of the pages is largely impersonal; it does not distinguish between individual speakers but keeps the steady flow of puns, chop-logic, and academic humour going. This banter constitutes an

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93. Petrarch and his followers frequently drew on the myth of Apollo's pursuit of Daphne and her metamorphosis into a laurel tree.

94. T. W. Baldwin, *Shakspere's Five-Act Structure* (Urbana, 1947), pp.533, 539.

95. The lyrics to these songs did not appear in the 1591 quarto but were first printed in Blount's collection of *Sixe Court Comedies* in 1632; therefore the extant lyrics may not be Lyly's. However, the context makes it clear that songs would be sung by the pages at these points. See Hunter's Appendix, "The Authorship of the Songs in Lyly's Plays", pp.367-372.

entertaining commodity in itself, rather like the music; though dramatically unimportant, it adds another attractive diversion to the play.[96] This too supports the idea that the pages' characters are merely vehicles for the entertainments they provide.

The pages' scene with the Watch, IV.2, is a perfect demonstration of Lyly's arbitrary writing. Although the scene refers to the central situations of Endimion and Sir Tophas again and again, it does nothing whatsoever to advance the action or affect those situations. The scene begins with Epiton's punning over a proverb: "you knowe it is sayd, the tyde tarieth no man ... A monstrous lye; for I was tide two houres, and tarried for one to vnlose mee" (IV.2.9-12). It proceeds on to a recitation of one of Sir Tophas' ridiculous love-poems, and its nonsensical metrical analysis by Epiton; this encourages Epiton's lengthy mock assertion of his learning and self-sufficiency while Dares and Samias egg him on: "Know, syrs, my Pallace is pau'd with grasse, and tyled with starres: for *caelo tegitur qui non habet vrnam*, he that hath no house, must lie in the yard" (IV.2.42-45). When this discourse comes to an end, Lyly moves the scene along abruptly with the pages' sudden desire to "finde where *Endimion* lieth" (IV.2.81). With this cue Lyly introduces the Watch, comprised of two watchmen and a Constable who "smell all of drinke, like a beggers beard". In response to the boys' request to see Endimion the Watchmen produce their own form of chop-logic, as natural as the pages' was clever. "No man shall see him," comes the initial reply, but when Samias pleads,"No man? Why we are but boyes," confusion ensues (IV.2.85-86). The First Watch is convinced:

> ... hee sayes true; for if I sweare I will neuer drinke my liquor by the quart, and yet call for two pints, I thinke with a safe conscience I may carouse both.
> (IV.2.87-89)

The Second Watch argues,

> If I saie to my wife, wife I will haue no Reysons in my pudding, she puts in Corance, smal Reysons are Reysons, and boyes are men. Euen as my wife shoulde haue put no Reysons in my pudding, so shall there no boyes see *Endimion*.
> (IV.2.94-97)

The Constable has the final say in the matter with a specious show of logical proof, but the audience will have come to Dares' opinion long before: "A watch, quoth you? a

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96. See also Powell, pp.157-158.

man may watch 7. yeres for a wise worde, & yet goe without it. Their wits are all as rustie as their bils." The slow-witted watch proved to be a favourite on the Elizabethan stage: Lyly's constabulary looks forward to Constable Dull in *Love's Labour's Lost* and Dogberry's motley crew in *Much Ado About Nothing*. Dogberry's watch performs an essential function in the action of *Much Ado* by catching the villains and uncovering Don John's plot, but Lyly's watchmen are entirely superfluous; they disappear from the play as suddenly as they entered. The only dramatic logic of the characters lies in their humorous characterizations.

In regard to Sir Tophas, the pages, along with Scintilla and Favilla, function primarily as foils, and their characterizations are largely irrelevant. One detail of the pages' characters which Lyly does emphasize is their small size; we are told several times that Dares and Samias can only reach Sir Tophas' waist (I.3, II.2). Lyly is clearly writing in view of a specific performance technique here: the disparity of the players' sizes would create a visual joke, especially as the small, clever pages make the large Sir Tophas (played by an older boy (with a beard coming -- see V.2.16-20) or perhaps by an adult) appear ridiculous.[97] Michael Shapiro adds that this dramatic opposition of boys and men is linked to the festal performance traditions of Misrule; inheriting these traditions, the boys' companies "mock comic authority figures like Grim [the Collier, in Edwarde's *Damon and Pythias*] and Sir Tophas, who may not necessarily represent real personages but who caricature values associated with power and responsibility."[98] Sir Tophas assumes these authoritarian postures in his pretensions of his superior intellectual, military, and creative gifts, which the pages bait but do not destroy. The Misrule associations may have been stronger in performance than on paper if, as Shapiro suggests, one of the boys' choral masters were playing the part of Tophas.

Sir Tophas' characterization is linked to other performance traditions as well, which necessarily apply to his relationship with the pages. One of Sir Tophas' earliest ancestors is the classical *miles gloriosus* or vainglorious soldier, epitomized in the

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97. Donald Edge suggests that the names "Epiton" and "Samias" emphasize this disproportion. Edge, pp.178-179.
98. Shapiro, p.48.

character of Pyrgopolinices in Plautus' *Miles Gloriosus* and followed by Thraso in Terence's *Eunuchus*. Sir Tophas echoes their outrageous boasting about their conquests in love and war:

> **TOPHAS.**
> I was the first that euer deuised warre, and therefore by *Mars* himselfe giuen me for my Armes a whole Armorie, and thus I goe as you see, clothed with Artillary; it is not Silkes (milksops) nor Tyssues, nor the fine wooll of Seres, but yron, steele, swords, flame, shot, terror, clamor, blood, and ruine, that rocks a sleepe my thoughts, which neuer had any other cradle but crueltie. Let me see, doe you not bleede?
> **DARES.**
> Why so?
> **TOPHAS.**
> Commonly my words wound.
> (I.3.50-58)

Sir Tophas' farcical presentation of himself as soldier and lover and his relationship with the pages relate him to Thraso and Pyrgopolinices. (The pages assimilate the parasite's function in encouraging the boasting, although their motivation is not food but amusement, much like Matthew Merrygreeke in Udall's *Roister Doister*.) These classical character models were certainly available to Lyly from boyhood: Terence's plays were basic texts in Humanist education, and although Plautus' comedies were considered to be less morally instructive, they too had been performed regularly at the universities from the 1550s.

Sir Tophas' inheritance from the *miles gloriosus* may have passed through his Italian cousins in the sixteenth century *commedia erudita* and its popular offspring, the *commedia dell'arte*. The Italian *Capitano* character continues the *miles*' habits of outrageous boasting and unsuccessful wooing. Daniel Boughner and Violet Jeffery enumerate numerous specific parallels between Sir Tophas and the braggarts of Della Porta, da Pesaro, and Lombardi.[99] Boughner and Jeffery have also noted Sir Tophas' debt to the Italian *Pedante* character for his pompous pretensions to classical learning. This character does not derive from a standard classical type but seems to be an Italian creation: examples of the *Pedante* are the Pedante in Aretino's *Il Marescalco*, Piero in *Gl'Ingannati*, Manfurio in Bruno's *Candelaio*, and the Pedante in Secchi's *Interesse*. These characters quote Latin and spout grammatical analyses; their ostentation provokes

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99. Daniel C. Boughner, "The Background of Lyly's Tophas", *PMLA* 54 (1939) 967-973. Jeffery, pp.98-102. See also Boughner's *The Braggart in Renaissance Comedy* (Minneapolis, 1954).

laughter, especially when they are baited, much as Tophas is encouraged by the pages. Boughner also finds an Italian precedent for Lyly's combination of pedant and braggart in Gramatica in Bulgarini's *Gli Scambi.*[100]

It is difficult to know how thoroughly Lyly was acquainted with the forms of the *commedia* in England. Sir Tophas' resemblance to the *Capitano* might simply be a matter of a common classical ancestor. His links to the *Pedante* are more contemporary, but it seems likely that Lyly is parodying the pedagogues of English society as much as employing an Italian stock type. Boughner tries to prove the Italian connection with visual evidence, "the curious circumstance that Tophas dons a gown when about to write love sonnets",[101] yet academic gowns were worn by English pedants as well, and the juxtaposition of the *Pedante* as a ridiculous lover is not a standard *commedia* feature. Lyly knew the quirks of English academia well; he came from a family of pedagogues and had relatives with names like Scholastica and Polydore; he had also spent seven years at Oxford with aspirations to an academic career. In *Euphues* Lyly rails against the scholars :

> Have they not now in stead of black cloth, black velvet, in stead of coarse sackcloth, fine silk? Be they not more like courtiers than scholars, more like stage-players than students ...[102]

These lines would suit Sir Tophas very well, for his laughable pretensions are as courtly as they are pedantic. As he accumulates his beard-brush and scissors, pen, ink, paper and pen-knife along with the gown in III.1, he transforms himself into the role of courtly lover, not simply that of an academic. "First discouer me in all parts, that I may be like a Louer, and than will I sigh and die," he says. Sighing and dying certainly sounds "more like courtiers than scholars", and Epiton reports that "he doth nothing but make Sonets" (IV.2.21). If, as suggested earlier, Sir Tophas is intended to represent a contemporary figure (Harvey?), then a recognizably pretentious imitation of courtly Petrarchan fashions by an ill-suited interpreter would doubtless amuse the elite audience.

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100. Boughner, "Lyly's Tophas", p.971.
101. Boughner, "Lyly's Tophas", p.971.
102. Lyly, *Euphues*, in *The Complete Works*, Vol.I, pp.274-275.

Although Gabriel Harvey's time at court was brief (he was secretary to the Earl of Leicester for a short time in 1580) his courtly aspirations were well known. Harvey had documented them himself in his fulsome *Gratulationes Valdinenses* of 1578 and had made himself a laughing-stock. His Cambridge colleagues satirized Harvey onstage in February 1580/1 in a Latin play, *Pedantius*, at Trinity College. Virginia Stern declares that the play

> unmistakeably parodied Harvey in the character of Pedantius, a Ciceronian rhetorician who aspires to be a lover, courtier, and man of affairs but succeeds only in making himself ridiculous. After purchasing an elaborate outfit of clothes, he has a brief trial at Court, but his hopes of preferment and his suit in love come to naught.[103]

G. C. Moore Smith, the play's modern editor, suspects that *Pedantius* was written as a sequel to a more conventional Latin comedy, no longer extant, in which the pedant would have fulfilled the traditional role of advisor to the young lover; the new play, he believes, was devised as a vehicle for the comic potential of the character of Pedantius himself.[104] *Pedantius* seems to have made quite an impression; Sir John Harington recalled its "harmeles Myrth" in his *Brief Apologie for Poetrie* in 1591, and when Harvey died in 1631 the play was published by way of satirical commemoration. Therefore it seems likely that Lyly would have known Harvey's character, its theatrical potential already established, by reputation if not by personal introduction.[105] Sir Tophas and Pedantius have several qualities in common: both aspire to courtly society, both assert themselves over boys, both acquire new costumes for the courtly postures they try to assume, and both assert their great learning with classical references and quotations. Most importantly, both of these self-inflated characters essay the rites of love for ridiculous comic effect. It seems likely that if Lyly was not imitating Pedantius/Harvey directly in his characterization of Sir Tophas, then he was probably imitating the general idea of the earlier character which had made such a hit at Cambridge.

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103. Virginia F. Stern, *Gabriel Harvey: His Life, Marginalia and Library* (Oxford, 1979), p.69.
104. G. C. Moore Smith, editor, *Pedantius: A Latin Comedy Formerly Acted in Trinity College, Cambridge*, Materialen zur Kunde des älteren Englischen Dramas (Louvain, 1905), pp.xxvi-xxvii.
105. Lyly's and Harvey's infamous prose attacks on each other came later in the 1590's, after the first performance of *Endimion*.
106. Morley, Vol.IX, p.205. He comments that "in Lyly we see the process of his development out of a lower form of dramatic life", that is, the native tradition.

Sir Tophas differs from his braggart relations in that he is never exposed in failing to live up to his boasts.[107] This is due to Lyly's choice of making him a non-active character; Sir Tophas has neither the antagonist status of Pyrgopolinices and Thraso nor the mock protagonist status of Thersites and Roister Doister. This peculiarly superfluous position raises the question of why Sir Tophas is included at all, especially in such an extended characterization. His parodic relation to the main plot is thematically aligned but scarcely essential. T. W. Baldwin recognizes that Lyly "has added without any necessity or real connection ... the comic Sir Tophas" but assumes, unconvincingly, that Lyly wanted to fill out the same pattern of five couples that he used in *Love's Metamorphosis*.[108] I suggest instead that the logic of Sir Tophas exists again in performance terms. Sir Tophas supplies a popular characterization as a diversion in itself, much like the pages' music and banter. The braggart character was obviously a favourite, as his continuing life on the English stage attests, and his appearance would have delighted an audience that knew how to recognize him and what sort of humour to expect. Therefore Sir Tophas needs no narrative justification; he is his own *raison d'être*, and Lyly's assimilation of a stock type into his thematic organization is a clever piece of plotting. An instance of characterization for its own sake is highly atypical for Lyly, yet Sir Tophas is unique as a Lylian character. He is drawn in much greater detail than any of Lyly's other characters: his props, costumes, habits of speech, and references to himself are all textually distinguished to reveal a specific personality. This very distinction would seem to argue against the theory of a contemporary model, for none of Lyly's other topical references are so personalized, not even the obvious identifications of Cynthia as Elizabeth or Midas as Philip II. If the original actor did include an impersonation in his portrayal of Sir Tophas I think it more likely that he inserted it into the standard braggart performance (with sword and comical armour) than that he designed the whole role around a specific contemporary model. The theatrical tradition seems to have inspired Lyly to greater heights of textual characterization than any topical reference ever did.

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107. Saccio, p.171.
108. Baldwin, p.516.

For all of its intellectual density and obliqueness of narrative, *Endimion* proves to be operating with definite theatrical constructs. In a sense *Endimion* is more "theatrical" than "dramatic"; the play emphasizes the artificiality of the presented action and the necessary interpretive function of the audience, though it fails to satisfy as a representation of human action in the Aristotelian sense. Characterization is not a priority in the play's construction, though the metaphorical function of the character device is. The characters are shadowy as representations of human beings; in most cases Lyly provides little in the way of humanizing or individualizing detail, so that it is difficult to say "who Endimion really is", or Tellus, or Dipsas, or Pythagoras.[109] And the Children of Paul's would not have answered those questions through their acting in the way that modern audiences expect from adult companies today. Their stylized performances would have kept the characters on a fairly symbolic level. Therefore Lyly emphasizes the symbolic potentiality of *Endimion*'s characters; he overloads them with significances far beyond the dramatic context, from the realms of geophysics and metaphysics, with shifting layers of allegory. In this way Lyly writes for a complex response from his audience. Instead of asking a narrative question like "Why is Corsites given custody of Tellus?", Lyly's audience is invited to frame a more complicated conceit, like "Who imprisons the Earth in a spiritual desert?" or "Are earthly truth and justice a perversion of the Christian ideals of Heaven?" By leaving his characters ambiguous Lyly allows, indeed teases his audience to bestow them with their ultimate significance. The characters can be as superficial or as symbolic as the audience chooses.

Lyly's ambiguous characterization responds to a specific set of theatrical circumstances: place, occasion, players and audience are all preordained. The abilities and limitations of the child actors required a formal playing style; the festive occasion and courtly setting made the elite audience, especially the queen, the primary focus of attention -- the entertainments were secondary diversions. Lyly's ingenuity lies in uniting these factors in a very formal structure, with great symmetry of action, which

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109. Carolyn Swift tries to speak about the characters as if they were psychological individuals, but she is limited to negative statements: "none of the characters know even themselves fully", "Tellus ... is not certain of her own identity", "Endimion ... is sincere but is also lying to himself".

throws the primary importance on the audience's acts of interpretation, yet allows for the popular secondary diversions of spectacle, music, witty dialogue, and traditional comic characters. The possible additions of contemporary impersonations to the actorial characterizations might likewise have added performance interest to what are otherwise rather static dramatic characters. But fundamental to the structure of *Endimion* is the importance of the audience. This is borne out in the identification of Cynthia as Elizabeth, a divinely chaste monarch; in the invitation for all the courtiers to identify themselves with Endimion and Eumenides, the perfect courtiers, friends, and lovers; and in the permission for all to laugh at and feel superior to the humiliation of Corsites and the pretensions of Sir Tophas. Ultimately Lyly compliments the importance of his courtly audience by allowing it to determine the play's meaning, though it be "neither Comedie, nor Tragedie, nor storie, nor anie thing, but that whosoever heareth may say this, Why here is a tale of the Man in the Moone."

CHAPTER 6

DYNAMIC INNOVATIONS:

GREENE'S *FRIAR BACON AND FRIAR BUNGAY*

Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay is derived from a prose romance, *The Famous Historie of Frier Bacon*, which describes various separate events in the life of the famous medieval philosopher and magician.[1] In his dramatization, Greene selects some of these episodes and weaves them together into a narrative which tells the story of the wooing of Margaret, the Fair Maid of Fressingfield. The beautiful country girl is first pursued by the lustful son and heir to King Henry III, Prince Edward, who subsequently relinquishes his interest in her to his friend, Lord Lacy, who is loved by Margaret and wishes to marry her. However, their union is delayed: first by the attentions of two competing country suitors, who eventually kill each other in a jealous duel, and second by Lacy's pretended rejection of Margaret, a test of her constancy which takes her to the brink of entering a convent before he returns to claim her as his bride. Friar Bacon applies his magic to help Edward's suit; he also conjures to entertain King Henry and his party of visiting royalty. In the second half of the play, however, Friar Bacon's magic begins to fail, and he renounces it as evil and devotes the rest of his life to Christian worship. The antics of two clown characters and the eventual marriage of Prince Edward to Eleanor, the visiting Princess of Castile, comprise the rest of the play's action.

This conglomeration of comic intrigue, romantic love, supernatural encounters, English history, and moral tests and reformations was billed as a "history" in the Stationers' Register and on the title page of the first quarto (1594). Critics have usually regarded the play as a "romantic comedy" and have taken its multifariousness as one of the characteristics of that developing genre.[2] Despite his classical Cambridge education,

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1. The earliest extant text of *The Famous Historie* was printed in 1627, thirty-five years after Greene's death, but it seems certain that Greene knew and drew from an earlier edition.

2. Kerstin Assarsson-Rizzi, *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay: A Structural and Thematic Analysis of Robert Greene's Play*, Lund Studies in English, 44, (Lund, 1972), p.16. J. A. Lavin, "Introduction", *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, The New Mermaids (London, 1969), p.xxi. Thomas Marc Parrott, *Shakespearean Comedy* (New York, 1949, reissued 1962), p.83. E. C. Pettet, *Shakespeare and the Romance Tradition* (London, 1949), pp.54-66. Norman Sanders, "The Comedy of Greene and Shakespeare", in *Early Shakespeare*, edited by John Russell Brown and Bernard Harris, Stratford-upon-Avon Studies, 3 (London, 1961), pp.35-53.

Greene was apparently unconcerned with following classical comic theory in writing his own plays. Most of his biographers have supposed that, like his characters Francesco in *Never Too Late* and Roberto in *A Groatsworth of Wit*, Greene fell into playwriting for the professional theatre as a quick way to earn money in London;[3] this may explain Greene's disregard of pure classical forms and his sometimes reckless imitations of popular styles. Greene responded with alacrity to the taste of his audience and the rapidly changing vogues of the popular theatre.

Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay was probably written sometime in 1589-1590.[4] The first recorded performance is listed in Philip Henslowe's diary as 19 February 1592, but he does not specify that it is a new play. The Lord Strange's Men gave seven performances of the play at the Rose Theatre in 1592-93. In April 1594 *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* was played jointly by the Queen's Men and Sussex's Men. The title page of the 1594 quarto describes it as "plaid by her Maiesties seruants," but it is impossible to tell whether this refers to some early Queen's Men performance before Henslowe ~~acquired~~ mentioned the play, or to the later performances in conjunction with Sussex's Men.[5]

PLAY STRUCTURE

Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay is written in sixteen clearly demarcated scenes which form the basic units of the play. (Act divisions were not added to the play until 1905.) With one exception, the stage is cleared between scenes and the new action begins in a different (fictional) location. With the changes of scene the action jumps from place to place and story to story: from Friar Bacon in Oxford to Margaret in Fressingfield to Henry at Court. In this way Greene makes each scene a separate, self-contained unit, rather like the episodes of his principal source, *The Famous Historie of Fryer Bacon*. The chronicle describes seventeen separate events in the life of the magician, and apart from the biographical premise it has little narrative unity. The arrangement of the anecdotes is only

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3. J. Churton Collins, "General Introduction", *The Plays and Poems of Robert Greene* (Oxford, 1905; reprinted New York, 1971), Vol.I, pp.2-10. For the biography of Greene (1558-1592) see also Nicholas Storojenko, *Robert Greene: His Life and Works*, translated by E. A. Brayley Hodgetts, reprinted in Vol.I of Alexander B. Grosart's edition of Greene's *Life and Complete Works in Prose and Verse* (London, 1881-1886).

4. Daniel Seltzer, "Introduction", *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, Regents Renaissance Drama Series (London, 1964), pp.ix-x.

5. See Scott McMillin, "The Queen's Men in 1594: A Study of 'Good' and 'Bad' Quartos", *English Literary Renaissance* 14 (1984) 55-69.

vaguely chronological and there is little or no connection established between events.[6] A causal narrative structure is immaterial to the purposes of the medieval chronicle; it is, however, more usual in comedy, and Greene concedes, at least superficially, to the claims of cause and effect in *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*. Greene retains the independence of the episodes with his alternating arrangement of scenes, yet he orders them along a temporal, roughly causal scheme. In this way he allows for a wide diversity of dramatic material and encourages formal, analogical connections as well as narrative links within it. *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* is a good example of a comedy in which the plot consists of more than a story. Some events, indeed entire scenes, could be cut from the play without changing the causes and effects of the story.[7]

The basic story line of the play follows the wooing of the Fair Maid of Fressingfield. This is the only sequence of action in the play which maintains an illusion of causality; Edward's desire for Margaret initiates the dramatic action in scene i, and the play cannot end until this action has been happily resolved by Margaret's marriage in scene xvi. Greene seems to have taken the idea for his story from the thirteenth episode of *The Famous Historie*: "How Fryer Bacon did helpe a young man to his Sweetheart, which Fryer Bungye would have married to another; and of the mirth that was at the wedding."[8] In the source Friar Bacon rescues the maiden from an unwelcome wedding forced on her by her father and Friar Bungay and restores her to her true lover. Greene turns the "knight" of the source into Prince Edward, thus adding the theme of royal decorum to the situation.[9] He also weaves in the favourite Renaissance theme of the conflict between love and friendship by transforming the "Oxfordshire gentleman" into Edward's trusted friend Lacy. As well, Greene reverses the two friars' roles in the action, aligning Friar Bungay with the true lovers and Friar Bacon with the lustful prince, which heightens the dangerous

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6. Exceptions are the transitions between episodes 6-7 and 16-17.

7. In his 1929 edition of the play E. H. C. Oliphant kindly marks these passages which, he says, "may be omitted without the value of the play being prejudicially affected." Oliphant, *Shakespeare and his Fellow Dramatists* (New York, 1929), Vol.I, p.xvi. The worth of these "expendable" subplots has been reasserted by more recent scholars. See Charles W. Hieatt, "Multiple Plotting in *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*", *Renaissance Drama* 16 (1985) 17-34. Richard Levin, "The Unity of Elizabethan Multiple-Plot Drama", *English Literary History* 34 (1967) 425-446.

8. Anonymous, *The Famous Historie of Fryer Bacon*, in *Early English Prose Romances*, edited by William J. Thoms, new edition (London, no date), pp.285-328, p.318. All subsequent references to *The Famous Historie of Fryer Bacon* refer to this edition.

9. The resulting royal-menial love triangle echoes that of Lyly's *Campaspe*. See Charles Hieatt, "A New Source for *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*", *Review of English Studies* N.S.32 (1981) 180-187.

potential of Friar Bacon's powers. After the love triangle resolves itself in scene viii, Greene extends the story in a traditional way with tests of Margaret's faithfulness: unwelcome suitors (who tenuously justify another episode from *The Famous Historie*); and a pretended rejection by Lacy, which is redeemed by his return and their marriage at court. Like Patient Griselda, Margaret proves to be a paragon of virtue.[10] The causal links between these trials falter, yet they maintain the primary story line.

The second major element of the plot consists of a series of scenes involving Friar Bacon's magic. In performance these scenes may be the play's major attraction, but in terms of narrative structure they are discontinuous and illustrative, retaining the episodic format of the chronicle source. All but one of Friar Bacon's seven scenes are grounded in *The Famous Historie.*[11] Only his benevolent prophecy in scene xvi is entirely unfounded in the source. Assarsson-Rizzi makes a strong case for Greene's selection, reordering, and restructuring of these episodes to form "a coherent dramatic sequence" on the *De Casibus* model.[12] Friar Bacon asserts his power and pride in scenes ii, v and vi, in which he impresses the Oxford doctors and the young lords with his magic and halts the wedding in Fressingfield; he triumphs spectacularly over Vandermast in scene ix, and then fails equally spectacularly with the Brazen Head by an error of judgement in scene xi. In scene xiii he causes real harm with his magic, and this brings on his repentance and Christian commitment. Yet though Assarsson-Rizzi speaks of this sequence as the "story" of Friar Bacon's fall, she never establishes that the episodes constitute a single, complete action. Nor does Greene's text, which is disturbingly ambivalent about the causal links between scenes xi and xiii. Does Friar Bacon lose his powers when the Brazen Head is destroyed, or just his "glory" (xi,115)?[13] If the latter, why does he not intervene in the murderous events of scene xiii? If the former, how is he able to command Miles' Devil and conjure up visions of the future in scenes xv and xvi? The only answer is that the Friar Bacon scenes are essentially independent units, and it is left to the spectator to infer their continuity.

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10. Udall extends the plot of *Roister Doister* by testing his virtuous heroine in a similar way: see Chapter 3.
11. Scene ii corresponds to the second episode of *The Famous Historie*; scenes v and vi to episode 13; scene ix to episode 7; scene xi to episode 5; and scene xiii to episode 16.
12. Assarsson-Rizzi, p.35.
13. All line references follow Daniel Seltzer's edition of *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* for the Regents Renaissance Drama Series (London, 1964).

Despite its narrative weaknesses, the Friar Bacon material seems to have been the theatrical focus of the play. Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay are, after all, the title characters, which indicates at least their audience appeal if not their structural pre-eminence. (Although Friar Bungay is quite a minor character with only three scenes, his part also includes some impressive conjuring.) It may be that the audience was as familiar with and fond of the Friar Bacon tales from *The Famous Historie* as Greene was himself. In any case, Friar Bacon and his magic were probably the highlights of the play. The second and third quartos of 1630 and 1655 illustrate the Brazen Head scene on their title pages, thus recognizing the theatrical pre-eminence of a scene unimportant to the narrative structure (see Figure 7). The sequel to *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, entitled *John of Bordeaux, or the Second Part of Friar Bacon* by its modern editor, follows up Friar Bacon and his magic, but ignores Margaret of Fressingfield.[14] The sequel also includes the German magician Vandermast, which suggests that the conjuring competition in *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* held great dramatic interest. The second Friar Bacon play, almost certainly by Greene, draws on *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* as well as different episodes from *The Famous Historie.*[15] It integrates Friar Bacon more thoroughly into the narrative structure of the play and so gives his magic a more organic, less ornamental function than it had in *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay. John of Bordeaux* makes Friar Bacon's dramatic primacy very clear; but doubtless it was evident in the performances (if not the text) of the earlier play as well.

Apart from these two major plot elements, *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* touches on other narrative sequences and character groupings. Scenes i, v, and vii involve the action of Prince Edward and his fool, Rafe, exchanging clothes and identities, although this results in nothing more dramatic than some comic byplay and confusion. Scenes iv, ix, xii, and xvi describe the royal courtship and marriage of Eleanor, Princess of Castile, and Prince Edward. This action is loosely tied to the main story in that it concludes Edward's interference with Margaret, but since he gives up his interest in Margaret before meeting

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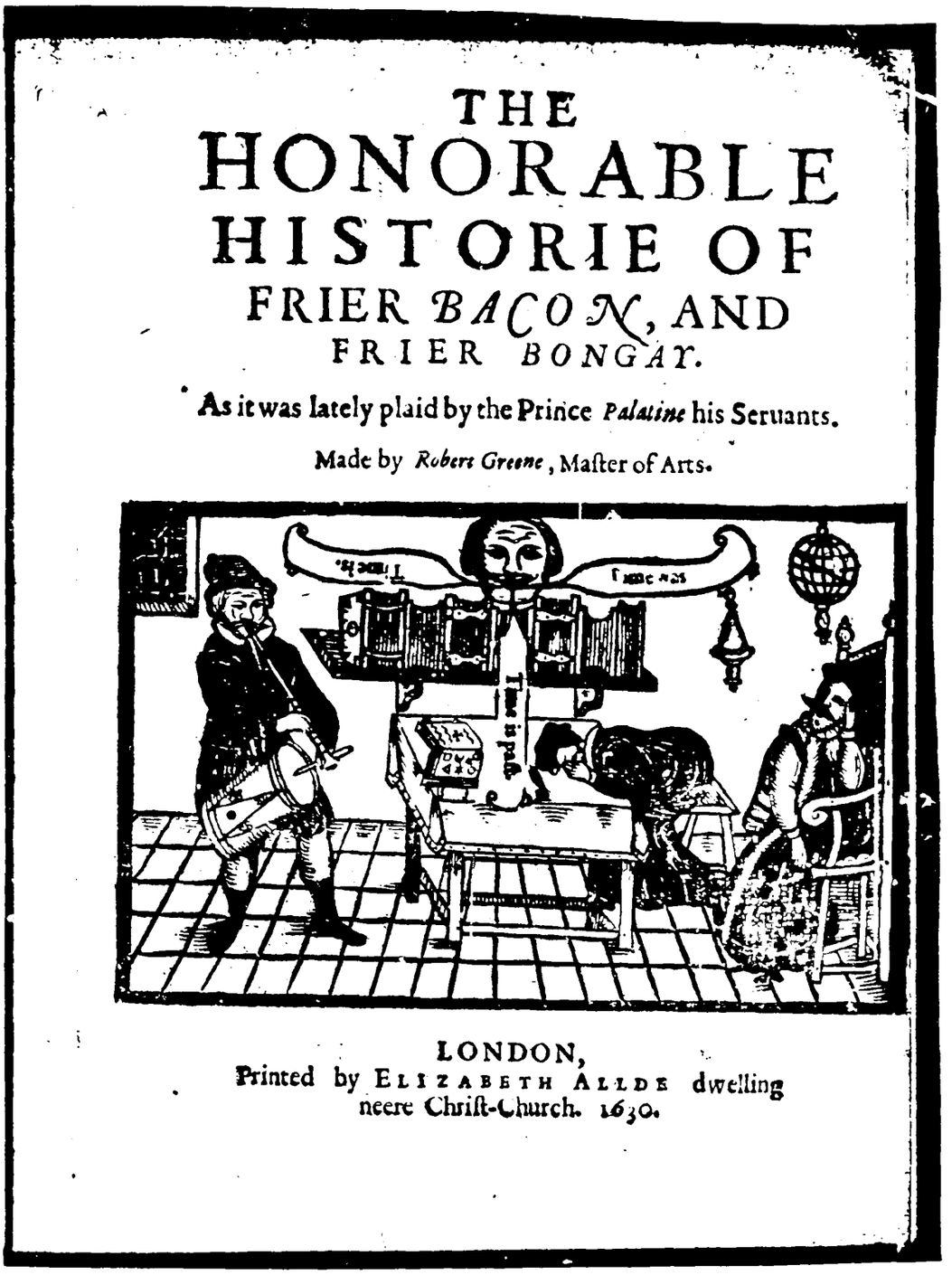
14. *John of Bordeaux or The Second Part of Friar Bacon*, edited by William Lindsay Renwick, The Malone Society Reprints (Oxford, 1935,1936). Paul Dean argues that Greene repeats the Margaret story in a darker, more tragic mode in the Rossalin plot in "*Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* and *John of Bordeaux*: A Dramatic Diptych", *English Language Notes* 18 (1981) 262-266.
15. Waldo F. McNeir, "Robert Greene and *John of Bordeaux*", *PMLA* 64 (1949) 781-801.



THE
HONORABLE
HISTORIE OF
FRIER *BACON*, AND
FRIER *BONGAY*.

As it was lately plaid by the Prince *Palatine* his Seruants.

Made by *Robert Greene*, Maſter of Arts.

LONDON,
Printed by ELIZABETH ALLDE dwelling
neere Chriſt-Church. 1630.

Figure 7
Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay
Title page of the 1630 Quarto

Eleanor, the marriage action seems effectively independent.[16] Peter Mortenson sees another plot interest in the pageant-like celebration of the bountiful garden of England, which is enacted primarily in scene xvi, although it is prepared in verbal imagery throughout the play.[17] Friar Bacon's bumbling student Miles might be said to have his own line of action in scenes xi and xv, in which he misjudges the Brazen Head and causes its destruction, incurs Friar Bacon's wrath, and is carried off to hell by a devil.

The relations between these various plots and subplots has been the focus of much of the recent study of *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*. Following the lead of William Empson in his 1935 discussion of double plots, Charles Hieatt, Richard Levin, Peter Mortenson, Norman Sanders, and Werner Senn have all concluded that the interweaving of the plot lines follows an analogical scheme: Greene, they believe, arranges his play in order to invite formal, thematic comparisons between the narratively disparate actions. Empson describes *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*'s structure as "a literary metaphor - 'the power of beauty is like the power of magic'; both are individualist, dangerous, and outside the social order."[18] Mortenson finds instead a demonstration of the subversiveness of misrule in a comparison between the actions of Edward and Friar Bacon.[19] Senn reaffirms that the multiplicity of events in *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* aims at synthesized meaning: he writes, "There is genuine interaction here, not on the traditional causal level but on the material and the analogical level."[20] Sanders regards such analogical construction as a typical form of thematic emphasis in the romantic comedies of Greene and Shakespeare.[21] Richard Levin expands this observation to a wider discussion of multiple plotting in Elizabethan drama generally, tragic as well as comic; he observes that the temporal organization of a play should highlight the affective contrasts and comparisons.[22] Hieatt's discussion of multiple plotting in *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* focuses on the play's temporal arrangements to argue that Greene urges connections

16. Charles Hieatt separates Edward's action towards Margaret as a different plot line altogether from the royal wedding, which he perceives as Henry's line of action. Hieatt, "Multiple Plotting", pp.18-20.
17. Peter Mortenson, "*Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*: Festive Comedy and 'Three-Form'd Luna'", *English Literary Renaissance* 2 (1972) 194-207.
18. William Empson, *Some Versions of Pastoral* (London, 1935, reprinted 1979), p.33.
19. Mortenson, pp.200-201.
20. Werner Senn, *Studies in the Dramatic Construction of Robert Greene and George Peele*, Swiss Studies in English, 74, edited by Berhard Fehr (Bern, 1973), p.147.
21. Sanders, p.40.
22. Levin, p.436.

between the four plots which are introduced in the first four scenes (Edward's action towards Margaret, Friar Bacon's towards fame, Margaret's towards Lacy, and Henry's towards the royal wedding and celebration of England).[23] Hieatt, however, believes that Greene's "extraordinary" use of multiple plotting ultimately leads to a confusion of dramatic values: the thematic contrast of "differing governing ideas in the same work fragments character and subverts continuity and overall development."[24]

Hieatt is perhaps disappointed in *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* because he reads the play as a purely literary, intellectual construction, whereas Greene wrote the play for the commercial theatre, with his ear tuned to the paying public. In all of his work, in both prose and drama, Greene anticipates popular taste and supplies his audience with the spectacular, the exotic, the lurid. Although Greene's balanced prose style is often called "Euphuistic", his dramatic structure is not Lylian. Greene fails to recreate the essential, formal stasis that lies at the heart of Lyly's situations. With their stylized repetitions of character-functions and actions Lyly's highly artificial comedies call out for intellectual, analogical interpretations. Even the early *Campaspe*, which *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* resembles in several aspects, foregoes motivation and action in favour of statements regarding the play's changing situations; it is essentially an aggregate of anecdotes. Greene's *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, although filled with anecdotal material, does not rely on the same intellectual response. Greene usually arranges his scenes around dramatic actions; only the final scene slows down into the stately formality of pageantry. The difference between the two contemporaries is in part a consequence of their different theatrical circumstances. While Lyly wrote primarily for the artificial style of the boy players and for the self-conscious, eagerly intellectual interpretations of his elite audience, Greene wrote for the men's companies and the audiences of the public theatres in what was, presumably, a less precious atmosphere. Therefore it seems unreasonable to look for the sort of elaborately contrived analogical scheme in Greene's comedy that one finds in Lylian court comedy. Although indebted to Lyly, Greene is far more interested in simple action than complex interpretation.

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23. Hieatt, "Multiple Plotting", pp.18-19.
24. Hieatt, "Multiple Plotting", p.33.

The more theatrical explanations for *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*'s multiple plotting offered by Gayley and Assarsson-Rizzi are perhaps more true to Greene's dramaturgy. Gayley emphasizes the spectacular appeal of Greene's plotting: "The interest is not primarily of character or solution; it proceeds from the pageant."[25] Assarsson-Rizzi examines this rationale in greater depth and discovers that spectacle, in the forms of the gorgeously costumed royalty and the marvellous spirits conjured up by the magicians, is evenly distributed over the play's sixteen scenes.[26] She concludes that visual display occupies a central, though not necessarily dominant, position in Greene's dramatic imagination; spectacle is "employed as a complement to the dialogue," either as reinforcements of the action or as diversions from it. In either form these effects actually hinder a narrative structure; Assarsson-Rizzi continues, "Emphasis on extravagant scenic display tends to distract the attention from the forward movement of plot since, in their own right, the highlights offered by remarkable magical feats reward the rising expectations of the audience."[27] The implication is that Greene's theatrical and visual conception of his play overrides a literary, classically "comic" narrative order and becomes the central framework.[28]

The episodic, the analogical, and the theatrical are all combined in David Bevington's theory of alternating scene structure in sixteenth-century drama. In *From Mankind to Marlowe* he explores this organizational pattern through the practical logistics of the small touring company of players typical of much of the century's theatre.[29] Bevington observes that since companies were small in numbers, the players necessarily took several roles each; therefore the characters played by a single actor could not appear on stage simultaneously; so the scripts tended to keep groups of characters separated from others by rotating them on and off the stage, thus allowing for the necessary costume changes and transformations. Morality plays like *Youth* and *Like Will to Like* are obvious examples of this sort of construction in the way that vice characters and virtuous characters

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25. Charles Mills Gayley, *Representative English Comedies* (New York, 1916), Vol.I, p.428.
26. See Assarsson-Rizzi's Appendix C, on p.153.
27. Assarsson-Rizzi, p.52.
28. Werner Senn sees such dramaturgy as apologetic: "Greene seems to have made a deliberate attempt to compensate for the loss of sustained dramatic action ... by introducing striking stage business. A brass head speaking through flames admirably serves this purpose in *Friar Bacon* and *Alphonsus*." Senn, p.140.
29. David Bevington, *From Mankind to Marlowe* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1962).

dominate the stage in turn, and *Enough is as Good as a Feast* begins to make implicit comparisons between the episodes an important part of the dramatic structure. Such structures also allowed for theatrical variety and changes of mood and rhythm as they moved from comic to serious, from sacred to vulgar and back again.

Greene therefore had a dramatic tradition of alternating episodes to draw on. In writing for the professional men's companies Greene would not have been as constrained by cast size as were his predecessors, the morality authors.[30] For example, Greene is able to bring fourteen different charaters onstage in scene ix of *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*. Yet even so the traditional alternating structure might have attracted Greene with its potential variety of theatrical styles and moods or its possibilities for formal, comparable variations on a central theme.[31] Greene used similar organizations of alternating scenes in *James IV, A Looking Glass for London and England* (a collaboration with Thomas Lodge); a similar structure appears also in the anonymous *George a Greene, The Pinner of Wakefield*, which is often attributed to him.

CHARACTERIZATION

From this rather paradoxical structure of contained, theatrical episodes strung along a wavering narrative line Greene derives a corresponding scheme of characterization: separate, static groups of characters united by a few mobile, dynamic characters. The scene-character grid (Figure 8) points out the inflexibility of his groupings of characters in *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*: Warren and Ermsby do not appear separately; Burden, Mason, and Clement form an inseparable trio; Lambert and Serlsby appear together; and most noticeably, the royal party of King Henry, the Emperor of Germany, the King of Castile, and his daughter Eleanor form a solid bank of characters in their four scenes. These groups recall the inseparable and indistinguishable duos, trios, and quartets of Lyly's court comedies, and share their potential for visual balance and symmetry on the stage. By comparison, the relative independence of Edward, Lacy, Friar Bacon, Miles, and Margaret in consorting with various other characters is striking. This contrast suggests what closer examination proves to be true: that Greene is happy to characterize the former characters as

30. Nevertheless company resources may still have influenced the shape of *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*; Scott McMillin tries to prove that the play was tailored for the Queen's Men to take on tour with a minimal company of eleven men and three boys. McMillin, pp.55-69.

31. Senn, p.28.

	i	ii	iii	iv	v	vi	vii	viii	ix	x	xi	xii	xiii	xiv	xv	xvi	no. scenes
EDWARD	X				X	X		X	X			X				X	7
LACY	X		X			X		X	X			X		X		X	8
WARREN	X				X		X							X		X	6
ERMSBY	X				X		X							X		X	6
RAFE	X				X		X					X					4
FR BACON		X			X	X			X		X		X			X	7
MILES		X			X		X		X		X				X		6
BURDEN		X					X										2
MASON		X					X										2
CLEMENT		X					X										2
DEVILS		X				X									X		3
HOSTESS		X															1
MARGARET			X			X		X		X				X		X	6
THOMAS			X														1
RICHARD			X														1
JOAN			X														1
K. HENRY				X					X			X				X	4
EMPEROR				X					X			X				X	4
CASTILE				X					X			X				X	4
ELEANOR				X					X			X				X	4
VANDERMAST				X					X								2
BUNGAY						X			X				X				3
CONSTABLE							X										1
SAXONY									X								1
HERCULES									X								1
LAMBERT										X			X				2
SERLSBY										X			X				2
KEEPER										X				X			2
POST										X							1
1 SCHOLAR													X				1
2 SCHOLAR													X				1
FRIEND														X			1

Figure 8
Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay
Scene-Character Grid

groups, which are often associated with particular settings; and that the latter characters are the featured roles whose individual characterizations are an authorial priority.

Groups

Greene uses his character groups for various purposes, yet rarely are they bound to necessary narrative action. For instance, the bank of royal characters seems to function chiefly as a spectacular backdrop. The presence of the silent Duke of Saxony within this party (ix,182,206) reinforces the notion that its function is largely visual. The "action" of Eleanor's marriage to Prince Edward is merely nominal; its success is a foregone conclusion in the play's celebration of England's majesty and fertility, and the potentially dramatic conflict between Edward's interests in Margaret and Eleanor is avoided. In fact, once Edward throws off his inappropriate infatuation with Margaret in scene viii he ceases to function as an individual agent and moves into the static pageantry of the royal group.[32] Greene characterizes the royal party with a uniform verbal style. Their stately, measured address to one another comprises many complimentary epithets:

> Martial Plantagenet, Henry's highminded son ...
> (ix,191)
>
> Great potentates, earth's miracles for state ...
> (xvi,1)
>
> Thou martial man that wears the Almain crown ...
> (xvi,25)

The identification of character with country in the royal diction emphasizes the metaphorical nature of the character device, recalling the allegory of pageantry and courtly drama.[33] These characters also employ occasional third-person references to themselves. To be sure this royal diction reveals little of individual or national personalities, but it evokes a majestic style, doubtless matched by the characters' opulent costumes.

Other groups of characters perform a partially visual function in that they denote setting. Where a modern theatre would use scenery, lighting, and sound to suggest place and atmosphere, Greene employs free characters. The three doctors, Burden, Mason, and Clement, provide the sense of Oxford's scholarly community, probably by their costumes as much as by their words. They share a proud, polite style of address dotted with

32. Mortenson, p.199. Senn, pp.80,122,145.
33. Percy Z. Round, "Greene's Materials for *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*", *Modern Language Review* 21 (1926) 19-23, p.22.

professional references to philosophy, mathematics, and Roman life.[34] Burden's first speech establishes the verbal characterization of the group with his academic language:

> Bacon, we hear that long we have suspect,
> That thou art read in magic's mystery;
> In pyromancy to divine by flames;
> To tell by hydromantic ebbs and tides;
> By aeromancy to discover doubts,
> To plain out questions, as Apollo did.
> (ii,13-18)

This sort of technical language is subsequently picked up in the speeches of Friar Bacon, Friar Bungay, and Vandermast, especially in the formal disputation of scene ix. The Oxford doctors provide a background to these focal roles.

Similarly the brief appearance of Thomas, Richard, Joan, "*and other clowns*" (iii, S.D.) en route to Harleston fair in scene iii does little more than introduce Fressingfield as a jolly, friendly, festive place, a pleasing setting and atmosphere for the first appearance of the heroine. The stage directions' indication of anonymous, silent characters again points to a desired visual effect on the stage. Richard, Thomas and Joan are consolidated into a single group characterization through a fairly uniform verbal style of straightforward syntax, mostly in prose, with references to country concerns. The independent details of the characterization apply to all three characters equally: they are all the children of dairy farmers, transporting cheese and butter to Harleston fair, where they intend to flirt and buy trinkets from the pedlars. Richard is allowed one individual speech about his father's purchase of a Beccles horse (iii,56-59), but where the author of *Misogonus* would have developed this sort of rustic detail extensively, Greene cuts it off immediately and returns to the primary topic of Margaret's affections. Greene is only interested in these rustic characterizations as a background for the Margaret-Lacy encounter, giving Margaret the context to remark,

> ... your terms
> Are finer than the common sort of men ...
> (iii,36-37),

and

> How different is this farmer from the rest ...
> His words are witty, quickened with a smile,
> His courtesy gentle, smelling of the court.
> (iii,60-63)

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34. Assarsson-Rizzi, p.102.

The two courtiers, Warren and Ermsby, supply padding rather than background to the six scenes in which they appear. Their leaders and companions vary from scene to scene: they follow Edward in scenes i and ix, Rafe in v and vii, and Lacy in xiv. In scenes ix and xvi they appear silently, contributing to the splendid stage pictures. Greene makes this function explicit in the stage directions for the procession which begins scene xvi; it includes "Warr[en], *carrying a rod of gold with a dove on it;* Ermsby, *with a crown and scepter*" along with "*other Lords attending*" who also remain silent (xvi, S.D.).

These several blocks of characters not only establish the settings and contexts for the actions of the bound characters; they also afford different moods and rhythms for Greene's changing scenes. The casual, chatty, down-to-earth mood of the first Fressingfield scene allows for a great contrast with the ensuing pomp and stately rhythms of the first Court scene. (The royal party moves from Windsor to Oxford and back again in the course of the play but their ambience remains constant.) Likewise the eager, playful spirit of the young lords in scenes i, v and vii contrasts greatly with the Latin phrases and academic formalities that announce the Oxford scholars in scenes ii, v, and vii. Greene employs similar shifts in mood throughout the play. Certainly there are subtler, more specific meanings to the rhythms of some scene changes -- for example, Henry's regal pronouncements ending scene iv are followed immediately by Rafe's mock-royal commands at the beginning of scene v, thus moving the play into the topsy-turvy, festive mode of misrule -- but in general, Greene seems to bring on new characters with new scenes to change the prevailing mood and evoke fresh interest from the audience.[35]

Primary Characters

Through these solid, static groups of characters Greene moves his central, mobile, dynamic characters. Edward, Lacy, Margaret, and Friar Bacon differ from the other characters in that they move outside of their own social spheres, as standardized by the group characters. These characters violate the Horatian notion of decorum which resides in much of Elizabethan comic theory. Margaret and Friar Bacon are low-born, private citizens, yet they consort with earls and kings. Edward and Lacy descend from the nobility

35. Werner Senn describes Greene's attempts to build up tension in one scene and displace it onto another, thus controlling the tension and relaxation of the audience, though Senn believes this method to be unsuccessful: "the coherence achieved is largely an external one ... Despite the clever deployment of theatrical effects Greene achieves no emotional and intellectual unity." Senn, p.204.

to the level of milkmaids in pursuit of love, although Greene does not "justify" this aberration by revealing Margaret as a long-lost daughter of a lord, as his Plautine and romantic models would have suggested.[36] In his use of these characters Greene stresses the notion of individuality. In his scheme they are not simply representatives of established social orders or dramatic conventions; they act according to independent agendas and decisions, which may or may not be conventional. Each of the four makes a major decision which changes the meaning of his or her character in the play: Lacy chooses to act as a lover instead of as a loyal friend and subject (vi,60-65); Edward chooses regal magnanimity over lust and revenge (viii,112-128); Margaret chooses the cloister over the world, and then takes love instead of the cloister (scene xiv); Friar Bacon renounces his magic powers for Christian devotion (xiii,85-108). The dynamism of these characters is so basic to the play's meaning that each characterization carries considerable structural weight. Greene accommodates the structural function by portraying the characters, especially Margaret and Friar Bacon, as extraordinary -- they literally stand outside the established order.[37]

The play's opening scene focuses on Edward, who dominates much of the action in the first eight scenes. His "malcontented" love for Margaret motivates three ensuing lines of action, which are plotted out in scene i: Lacy's approach to Margaret as his surrogate, Edward's appeal to Friar Bacon, and Rafe and Edward's exchange of clothes. These plots lead on to Friar Bacon's exposure of Lacy's love for Margaret in scene vi and Edward's confrontation with Lacy and Margaret in scene viii. Until scene viii Edward's characterization is fairly conventional. His initial entrance in scene i, "*malcontented*," (i, S.D.) draws on a theatrical tradition of melancholy lovers -- a tradition which also contributes to Greene's *Alphonsus* and *A Looking Glass for London and England*.[38] In

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36. Greene's own prose romance, *Pandosto*, follows the standard pattern, in which the prince, Dorastus, suffers for his ignoble love for the shepherdess, Fawnia, until she is revealed to be a princess who was lost in infancy; then their love and marriage is celebrated by all. See Allan H. MacLaine, "Greene's Borrowings from his own Prose Fiction in *Bacon and Bungay* and *James the Fourth*", *Philological Quarterly* 30 (1951) 22-29.

37. Assarsson-Rizzi, p.66.

38. Lawrence Babb, "Sorrow and Love on the Elizabethan Stage", *The Shakespeare Association Bulletin* 18 (1943) 137-142. See also Senn, p.31.

describing his new beloved, Edward uses the standard phrases and imagery of the Elizabethan love-poet:[39]

> I tell thee, Lacy, that her sparkling eyes
> Do lighten forth sweet love's alluring fire;
> And in her tresses she doth fold the looks
> Of such as gaze upon her golden hair;
> Her bashful white mix'd with the morning's red
> Luna doth boast upon her lovely cheeks;
> Her front is beauty's table, where she paints
> Her glories of her gorgeous excellence;
> Her teeth are shelves of precious margarites
> Richly enclosed with ruddy coral cleeves.
> Tush, Lacy, she is beauty's over-match,
> If thou survey'st her curious imagery.
> (i,50-61)

In scene vi Greene begins to offer more emotional facets to Edward's characterization with his succinct but heartfelt comments on the wooing scene between Lacy and Margaret which he watches in the magic glass. His laconic "How familiar they be, Bacon" (vi,108) is a wonderfully actable line; and his attempt to stab the lovers through the glass (vi,127-130) effectively expresses the character's violent anger and frustration at his position. This anger propels Edward into his next scene, scene viii, in which he enters "*with his poniard in his hand*" (viii,S.D.) and opens the dialogue with a snarling accusation: "Lacy, thou canst not shroud thy trait'rous thoughts ..." (viii,1). To be sure, the thematic conflicts of scene viii are conventional Renaissance questions: love versus friendship, self-control versus control of others, love that is freely given versus love that is purchased or commanded.[40] Greene skilfully embodies these arguments in his characters so that the conflict seems to be genuinely motivated. The result is one of Greene's best dramatic scenes. The suspense of the scene, and indeed of the play up to

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39. For example, Watson's Passion VII from the *Hekatompathia* (1582) contains a similar catalogue:

> "Her yellowe lockes exceede the beaten goulde;
> Her sparkeling eies in heau'n a place deserve;
> Her forehead high and faire of comely moulde ...
> Each eybrowe hanges like Iris in the skies;
> Her eagles nose is straight of stately frame;
> On either cheeke a Rose and Lillie lies;
> Her breath is sweete perfume, or hollie flame;
> Her lips more red then any Corall stone;
> Her necke more white, then aged Swans that mone ..."

Thomas Watson, *The Hekatompathia, or Passionate Centurie of Love (1582)*, edited by S. K. Heninger, Jr., Scholars' Facsimiles and Reprints (Gainesville, 1964), p.21.

40. Greene adopts these themes throughout his work; see, for example, the treatment of the love versus friendship motif in *Ciceronis Amor: Tullies Love* (1589), reprinted in facsimile with an introduction by Edwin Haviland Miller, Scholars' Facsimiles and Reprints (Gainesville, 1954).

this point, leads up to Edward's response: will he kill Lacy? seize Margaret by force? forgive them? Greene keeps the audience guessing by constructing a scene in which Edward tries out various approaches: in his first speech he accuses Lacy of treachery (viii,1-13); in his second he plays on the emotional bonds of friendship (24-35); in the third speech he tries to buy Margaret's acquiescence with a vision of future luxury (51-66). Finding that each of these verbal tactics has failed, Edward then takes a harder line and proposes to execute Lacy on the spot. The brief plan outlined in lines 74-80 is distilled into resolute single sentences -- "Lacy shall die as traitor to his lord," (89) and "To end the loves 'twixt him and Margaret" (92) -- and finally into suspenseful silence as Edward listens to Lacy's and Margaret's frantic attempts to convince Edward to spare each other's lives. Out of this very dramatic encounter comes Edward's decisive monologue in which Greene portrays him, rather endearingly, speaking to himself:

> Leave, Ned, and make a virtue of this fault,
> And further Peg and Lacy in their loves.
> So in subduing fancy's passion,
> Conquering thyself, thou get'st the richest spoil.
> (viii,118-121)

With this speech the meaning of Edward's character is transformed.[41] The character changes from a figure of lust to one of self-control, from violence to tolerance. From the private, emotional mood of the second-person Edward switches at once to the public, regal, third-person references to himself with which he dispatches the determined course of action:

> The Prince of Wales hath conquered all his thoughts,
> And all his loves he yields unto the earl ...
> And Ned, as he is true Plantagenet,
> Will give her to thee frankly for thy wife.
> (viii,123-128)

From this point on Greene regards the emotional and dramatic life of the character as resolved and complete, and he leaves the characterization of Edward to the conventional gestures of diplomacy and love, this time for Eleanor. Although Edward reappears in scenes ix, xii, and xvi, he has only four speeches in these scenes. The language and the character remain stately and unemotional. Edward is used as a key figure in the pageantry

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41. Assarsson-Rizzi writes, "Contrary to the fixed stereotyped characters usually found in romance, and also in comedy, Edward undergoes a transformation of character, a process emphasized by Greene." Assarsson-Rizzi, p.128.

of the royal wedding and his individuality is effectively subsumed into the group identity of the royal party.[42]

A comparison of Edward with the parallel figure of the Knight in *The Famous Historie* throws Greene's characterization into sharp relief. Character-sketching is minimal in the episode, which says simply,

> ... there was a knight that was a suitor to [the fair maid, Millisant], and did desire that hee might have her to his wife: but this knight could never get from her the least token of good wil: so surely was her love fixed upon the [other] gentleman. This knight seeing himselfe thus despised, went to Fryer Bungye, and told him his mind, and did promise him a good piece of money if he could get her for him, either by his art, or counsell. ... The knight rewarded him for his counsell, and told him that if it tooke effect, he would be more bountifull unto him ...
> (p.318)

The only thing we know about the knight is that he seems to have plenty of money. Greene expands the character enormously by making him a royal figure, heir to the English throne. This alteration provides an easy link to the royal figures of other episodes. It also adds all sorts of political and moral tension to the action: the impossibility of Edward marrying Margaret, the potential danger of a ruler swayed by passion, and the questions of loyalty and obedience to a sovereign in such extreme circumstances. The change affects the audience's perception of the action as well; Werner Senn describes it as "a basic alteration that essentially modifies the response ... all [Edward's] actions will be judged in the light of the high place he occupies."[43] The royal characterization also allows Greene to use one of his favourite dramatic motifs -- the danger to the heroine of a lustfully-inclined ruler, which recurs in *James IV*, *A Looking Glass for London and England*, *John of Bordeaux*, and *George a Greene*.[44]

In *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* Greene not only invokes the idea of an English prince, but calls up the historical figure of Prince Edward. This particular choice might have tilted the play towards sympathy for a temporarily tempted hero, instead of revulsion for an immoral oppressor; Holinshed says of Edward I, "wise he was and vertuous ... he was a constant freend ... he was sure not onlie valiant but also politike, labouring to bring this diuided Ile, into one entier monarchie, which he went verie neere to have

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42. Mortenson, p.199. Senn, pp.80,122,145.
43. Senn, p.79. See also Werner Senn, "Robert Greene's Handling of Source Material in *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*", *English Studies* 54 (1973) 544-553, 546.
44. Lavin, p.xxiii.

atchieued."[45] Hieatt writes, "Edward had the reputation of having been a peerless crusader and a popular, altogether attractive figure in Greene's time."[46] This may help to explain why Edward's morality is not criticized more vehemently in the play. Although in the first half of *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* Edward is associated with Tarquin, and Lacy states explicitly that Edward intends to "entrap and beguile the lass" (vi,62), after the magnanimous decision of scene viii the play wholeheartedly endorses Edward's status as a hero and ultimately links him with the peace and prosperity of Queen Elizabeth, "Diana's rose" (xvi,62). The only criticism comes in comic form from Rafe, who teases Edward about his fickleness:

> ...never believe him you though he swears he loves you ... Why, his love is like unto a tapster's glass that is broken with every touch; for he loved the Fair Maid of Fressingfield once, out of all ho. Nay, Ned, never wink upon me; I care not, I.
> (xii,71-74)

The character of Lacy likewise has a historical namesake: the thirteenth-century Edmund Lacy, Earl of Lincoln, who married Marjorie, niece of the Earl of Chester in 1232, and married a foreign lady-in-waiting of Queen Elinor's at the king's behest in 1247.[47] Vestiges of these weddings might be seen in the play's marriage between Lacy and Margaret and in the threatened marriage between Lacy and "a Spanish lady ... chief waiting-woman to the Princess Eleanor" when ostensibly "the earl is forc'd/ To love the lady by the king's command" (x,131-132,148-149). Edmund Lacy, however, did not have the historical stature of Prince Edward, and Greene rearranged his life as he saw fit. Nor did Greene rely much on the "Oxfordshire gentleman", the true lover in the episode from *The Famous Historie*; this source offers little in the way of characterization but describes him as "vertuous" and stresses his emotional attachment to his beloved, both his grief at their separation ("he cryed out that he was undone, for now should he lose his life in losing of his love") and his gladness at their reunion ("they both wept for ioy, that they so happily once more had met", p.319).

Greene's characterization of Lacy, like that of the Oxfordshire Gentleman, is defined by his relationships with other characters. In scene i Lacy is presented as

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45. *Holinshed's Chronicles* (London, 1807; reprinted New York, 1965), Vol.II, pp.545-546. See also Vol.II, pp.386,429,431,435,478-546. Round, p.20.
46. Hieatt, "A New Source", p.183.
47. Holinshed, Vol.II, pp.372,414. See also Round, pp.20-21.

Edward's friend and counsellor as he speaks in reference to Edward's melancholy and lust (i,1-11,62-67); he urges Edward to consider the beauties of the more suitable court ladies, but agrees to act as his surrogate wooer to Margaret "as if that Lacy were in love with her" (i,155). Scene iii shows him on his friend's errand; but his primary meaning as a character is divulged through Margaret's description:

> His words are witty, quickened with a smile,
> His courtesy gentle, smelling of the court;
> Facile and debonair in all his deeds,
> Proportion'd as was Paris, when in gray,
> He courted Oenon in the vales by Troy.
> (iii,62-66)

From this catalogue of courtly virtues Greene conveys the sense of Lacy as the perfect gentleman and courtier and associates him with a legendary (if dangerous) lover. But Lacy does not truly enact the role of lover in his own right until scene vi, when he argues with himself over the conflicting duties of loyal friendship and true love:

> Recant thee, Lacy, thou art put in trust.
> Edward, thy sovereign's son, hath chosen thee,
> A secret friend, to court her for himself,
> And darest thou wrong thy prince with treachery?
> Lacy, love makes no exception of a friend,
> Nor deems it of a prince but as a man.
> Honor bids thee control him in his lust;
> His wooing is not for to wed the girl,
> But to entrap her and beguile the lass.
> Lacy, thou lovest; then brook not such abuse,
> But wed her, and abide thy prince's frown,
> For better die, than see her live disgrac'd.
> (vi,54-65)

As in Edward's monologue, here Greene uses second-person address to render the intimacy of Lacy's private thoughts and decisions and create the sense of an internal debate. In this speech Greene lays out the opposing values of Lacy's dilemma: trust versus treachery, love versus friendship, honourable wedded love versus disgraceful lust. Greene not only rehearses the standard Renaissance conflict between love and friendship (as seen also in Eumenides' dilemma in III.4 of *Endimion*, or Proteus' conflict in II.6 of *Two Gentlemen of Verona*), he amplifies the question with the political concern, more typical of the history plays than of comedy, of loyalty to an immoral ruler. Lacy's decision therefore ties the character to a political stance as well as a moral and emotional position. By employing these conventions Greene is able to present an abbreviated account of Lacy's meaning as a character.

Lacy embodies another literary convention in scenes iii and vi in that he woos Margaret in the disguise of a local farmer's son. A change of clothes often denotes a change in character meaning, and this pastoral device locates Lacy and *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* in a long romance tradition (one which includes Greene's *Pandosto* and *Menaphon*). In *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* the device is not sustained for any great length of time, but it temporarily bridges the social gap and allows Lacy and Margaret to meet.[48] The connotations of the convention add the values of humility and equality to the meaning of Lacy's role as lover, values which continue to motivate the love story between lord and dairymaid. The disguise also contributes to the thematic passage into and out of misrule, like Rafe's and Edward's exchange of clothes in scenes v and vii.

At any rate Lacy's commitment to the role of honourable lover is fastened down in his promises of marriage in scene vi:

> I meant, fair girl, to make thee Lacy's wife ...
> The Lincoln countess, for it shall be so.
> I'll plight the bands, and seal it with a kiss.
> (vi,120-126)

His faith is then tested by Edward's threats and accusations in scene viii, but Lacy stands firm, first in a restatement of his position in the "debate":

> Love taught me that your honor did but jest,
> That princes were in fancy but as men,
> How that the lovely maid of Fressingfield
> Was fitter to be Lacy's wedded wife
> Than concubine unto the Prince of Wales.
> (viii,19-23)

and then in his heroic ultimatum of love or death:

> Rather than live and miss fair Margaret's love,
> Prince Edward, stop not at the fatal doom,
> But stab it home; end both my loves and life.
> (viii,81-83)

After such a determined and effective stance as lover, Lacy's letter of rejection comes as a shock in scene x:

> ... fancy, that slippeth in with a gaze, goeth out with a wink; and too timely loves have ever the shortest length. I write this as thy grief, and my folly ...
> (x,125-128)

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48. Assarsson-Rizzi, p.68.

Greene distances this betrayal somewhat from Lacy's character by delivering it impersonally in the form of a letter. Seltzer tells us that this too follows literary convention:

> This formal device [of the letter] (its traditional nature preserved even in the typography of the quartos) occurs again and again in Greene's novels; as in these works, its style is euphuistic; note, however, that this letter is planned for a theatrically appropriate length, for stage reading.[49]

Regardless of its formality, the content of the letter appears to negate Lacy's established character-meaning as the true lover.[50] Perhaps Greene intends the audience to realize that such a rejection is "out of character" for Lacy and cannot be true. However, it seems equally likely that the audience would go along with Margaret's belief that Lacy's character has changed. In any case this development certainly raises the suspense of the narrative.

Greene leaves Lacy's character in doubt until scene xii, when he reaffirms his love for Margaret at Henry's court and receives a royal blessing for his wedding. The letter of rejection is not explained or even mentioned directly in this scene, but Lacy

> ... discourseth of the constancy
> Of one surnam'd, for beauty's excellence,
> The Fair Maid of Fressingfield.
> (xii,43-45)

"Constancy" is the operative word, since Lacy reveals in scene xiv that his rejection "'Twas but to try sweet Peggy's constancy" (xiv,73). In retrospect, then, it seems clear that by scene xii Lacy has received the Post's account of Margaret's behaviour, and that once he is assured of her constancy as well as her beauty, he is eager to go ahead with the marriage. But none of this action is written into the script, and unless the staging made the narrative sequence of Lacy's action much clearer (by showing the Post reporting to Lacy, for example), the audience might well be confused: in scene x, Lacy's letter breaks off his relationship with Margaret, but when we next see him in scene xii he has resumed his former role and is eagerly praising his beloved and planning the wedding.

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49. Seltzer, p.70, f.122.1.

50. Senn comments, "Lacy's sudden jilting of Margaret is as surprising, as arbitrary, and as little rooted in his character as his no less surprising change of mind later on." Senn, *Greene and Peele*, p.120. Seltzer provides a contrasting view on the letter: "No realistic motivation would have been necessary, for Greene's audience would have found the logical emphasis where in fact it occurs, in Margaret's response." Seltzer, p.xvii.

Margaret is likewise confused by Lacy's vacillations when he confidently returns to claim her in scene xiv. "Did not my lord resign his interest,/ And make divorce 'twixt Margaret and him?" she asks, along with the audience (xiv,71-72). Lacy replies, "'Twas but to try sweet Peggy's constancy" (73), but fails to explain why such a test was necessary, or why she should have taken it lightly. He in turn is confused by the seriousness of Margaret's response: "Whence, Peggy, comes this metamorphosis?" (xiv,65). But the assumed metamorphosis of Lacy's own character, from lover to deserter, has effected a similar transformation in Margaret's character, from lover to nun; when he resumes his former role, she returns to hers; and these are the identities that are solemnized and celebrated in the pageantry of the wedding in scene xvi.

Lacy is therefore drawn as a "self-made man": his dynamic meaning as a character results from individual choices, framed though they are in literary convention. From his initial meaning as a friend and lord he assumes the disguise of a farmer to act as a surrogate lover. With the resumption of his true name he rejects the old claims of friendship and chooses to risk his life for his new role as a true lover. He then temporarily abandons this role to test Margaret's fidelity, but resumes it and seals his role as a true lover in the marriage ceremony at the end of the play. Lacy's decisions in the second half of the play are not dramatized as clearly as they are in the soliloquy of scene vi, but nevertheless Greene's narrative structure ~~relies on the assumption that they have been made~~ they are crucial to. Their lack of motivation makes the character seem perverse to modern readers, but the Elizabethan audience might well have inferred the necessary rationale from the actorial clues in the staging or from the connotations of the conventions invoked. In any case the dynamism of this character remains central to the structure of the play.

The meaning of Margaret's character as a love-object is available from the first scene of the play and remains constant throughout. Her role as an agent, however, develops and changes as the play progresses, and she too eventually chooses her ultimate identity. The corresponding character in *The Famous Historie* is simply described as "a faire mayde, called Millisant" who could not accept the attentions of of the knight, "so surely was her love fixed upon the gentleman" (p.318). Greene transforms this basic motif into an extended catalogue of female beauty in Edward's speeches of scene i; first he lists

the standard compliments to Margaret's eyes, hair, cheeks, forehead, and teeth,[51] and then he translates this paean into Margaret's specific circumstances as a dairymaid:

> ... there amongst the cream bowls she did shine
> As Pallas 'mongst her princely huswifery.
> She turned her smock over her lily arms
> And dived them into milk to run her cheese;
> But whiter than the milk, her crystal skin,
> Checked with lines of azure, made her blush,
> That art or nature durst bring for compare.
> (i,75-81)

The association of Margaret with milk, a traditional emblem of health and virtue, establishes her love as wholesome as well as beautiful.[52]

After the descriptive introduction to Margaret's character in scene i, Greene brings her onto the stage for the first time in scene iii, amidst the rustic holiday spirit of the Harleston fair-goers. Although Margaret flirtatiously hopes "that young men should be frank this day,/ And court us with such fairings as they can" (iii,12-13), she has "little leisure to debate of [love]" (53), that is, until the full impression of Lacy's disguised presence dawns on her. In her long speech, which most editors mark as "aside", she finds that,

> ... this farmer's jolly son
> Passeth the proudest that hath pleas'd mine eye.
> But, Peg, disclose not that thou art in love,
> And show as yet no sign of love to him,
> Although thou well wouldst wish him for thy love;
> Keep that to thee, till time doth serve thy turn
> To show the grief wherein thy heart doth burn.
> (iii,69-75)

Yet again Greene shows a character making an important internal decision using the second-person. The repetition of the word "love" within the speech indicates the character's transformation into a lover as well as a love-object. In the next encounter with Lacy in scene vi and in the confrontation with Edward in scene viii Margaret speaks and acts for the cause of love. As Norman Sanders remarks, the character expands beyond the initial human, social characterization of the keeper's beautiful daughter to become "the spokesman for love itself."[53] Margaret reports that love has taken physical possession of her:

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51. See note 39 above.
52. Cecile Williamson Cary, "The Iconography of Food and the Motif of World Order in *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*", *Comparative Drama* 13 (1979) 150-163.
53. Sanders, p.48.

I fed mine eye with gazing on his face,
And, still bewitch'd, lov'd Lacy with my looks.
My heart with sighs, mine eyes pleaded with tears,
My face held pity and content at once ...
(viii,41-44)

Her commitment to love allows her to reject Edward's bribes and threats in scene viii. Her confidence in the strength of love makes her impervious to mortal concerns:

Why, thinks King Henry's son that Margaret's love
Hangs in the uncertain balance of proud time,
That death shall make a discord of our thoughts?
No; stab the earl, and 'fore the morning sun
Shall vaunt him thrice over the lofty east,
Margaret will meet her Lacy in the heavens.
(viii,93-98)

It is this faith that eventually convinces Edward that he cannot sever "such friends as glory in their loves" (viii,117).

In scene x Greene shows the character of Margaret once again becoming the object of men's love, this time in the compliments of the country squires, Lambert and Serlsby. But unlike his passive description of the character in scene i, Greene is now concerned to present Margaret's view of this role. Although she deflects the competing proposals of her suitors, they cause her anxiety and lead her to a comparison with another character whose meaning resides in love and beauty:

Shall I be Helen in my froward fates,
As I am Helen in my matchless hue,
And set rich Suffolk with my face afire?
(x,93-95)

Her sense that "love is now my bale" (x,92) is immediately confirmed with the delivery of Lacy's letter forsaking her. Margaret grieves that Lacy's commitment to love was not as strong as her own, thus reaffirming her own character:

If Lacy had but lov'd, heavens, hell, and all
Could not have wronged the patience of my mind ...
The wealth combin'd within the English shelves,
Europe's commander, nor the English king
Should not have moved the love of Peggy from her lord.
(x,146-152)

However, she refuses to persist in a one-sided love, and she abandons all thoughts of Lacy, love, and the world:

The world shall be to her as vanity;
Wealth, trash; love, hate; pleasure, despair.
For I will straight to stately Framingham,
And in the abbey there be shorn a nun,

And yield my loves and liberty to God.
(x,158-162)

This extraordinary decision obviously raises the suspense over the outcome of the plot, but it also amounts to a radical change in character meaning. When Margaret next appears in scene xiv she is wearing "*nun's apparel*" (S.D.). This visual transformation of the character sign on the stage symbolizes a more essential change which Margaret herself acknowledges:

I loved once; Lord Lacy was my love;
And now I hate myself for that I lov'd,
... all love is lust but love of heavens.
(xiv,12-17)

She consciously rejects her former ruling passion:

I leave both love and love's content at once.
(xiv,62)

When Lacy arrives he accurately describes this development as a "metamorphosis" (65), yet he has come to offer her another option -- a wedding at Windsor. Margaret is then forced to determine her own fate:

Choose you, fair damsel; yet the choice is yours.
Either a solemn nunnery or the court;
God or Lord Lacy. Which contents you best,
To be a nun, or else Lord Lacy's wife?
(xiv,81-84)

As in scene viii Greene has built up the dramatic tension in the scene so that all suspense is focused on Margaret's response. Of course she gives in and resumes her former devotion to love, which as before, manifests itself through her physical form:

The flesh is frail. My lord doth know it well,
That when he comes with his enchanting face,
Whatso'er betide, I cannot say him nay.
Off goes the habit of a maiden's heart ...
Lacy for me, if he will be my lord.
(xiv,86-92)

Needless to say the romantic union is the conventional ending for comedy; Greene's novelty is in generating it so explicitly from individual choices. Coincidence, unexpected revelations, and fate do not play a major part in Margaret's decision; she chooses in accordance with her established character.

Friar Bacon is obviously the most fully drawn character in Greene's primary source, *The Famous Historie of Fryer Bacon*. His characterization in the chronicle fits into a medieval romance tradition of benign, dignified enchanters which includes Merlin in

Morte D'Arthur, Maugis in *The Foure Sonnes of Aymon*, Pacolet in *Valentine and Orson*, Oberon in *Huon of Bordeaux*, and Virgilius in *The Lyf of Virgilius*.[54] The Friar Bacon of the play is a clear descendant of this tradition, although Greene modifies the characterization from *The Famous Historie* considerably. He reduces Friar Bacon's role as a practicing friar, disregards his humble background, reduces his benevolence and patriotism, and expands his pride and desire for personal fame.[55] Assarsson-Rizzi concludes that in Greene's play, "Friar Bacon is altogether of a different stature, and his character has a complexity which is entirely lacking in the figures belonging to medieval romance."[56] She might add that Greene's Friar Bacon also surpasses the enchanters that had been presented on the contemporary stage: neither Brian sans Foy in *Clyomon and Clamydes* (c. 1570) nor Bomelio in *The Rare Triumphs of Love and Fortune* (c. 1582) have anything like Friar Bacon's dramatic authority.[57] The contemporary enchanter figure with dramatic stature and complexity is of course Marlowe's Doctor Faustus; although Faustus was for a time taken to be the inspiration for Friar Bacon, more recent critical opinion has judged that *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* may be the earlier play.[58] Because of his antecedents Friar Bacon is to a certain extent a "received" character, his meaning already intact from an earlier tradition.

Friar Bacon is first described in scene i through Rafe's suggestion that Edward should consult him and employ his magic to win the Fair Maid of Fressingfield.

> Oh, he is a brave scholar, sirrah; they say he is a brave nigromancer, that he can make women of devils, and he can juggle cats into costermongers.
> (i,92-95)

The particular conjurations that Rafe suggests -- that Edward be turned into a silken purse tucked into the girl's pocket, or into a nightshirt for her to wear to bed -- are in jest, but their bawdy implications make it clear that the lords are not intending to use magic for

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54. Waldo F. McNeir, "Traditional Elements in the Character of Greene's Friar Bacon", *Studies in Philology* 45 (1948) 172-179.
55. Assarsson-Rizzi, pp.36-40.
56. Assarsson-Rizzi, p.39.
57. McNeir, "Traditional Elements", p.179.
58. W. W. Greg's debunking of the priority of *Doctor Faustus* in 1950 seems to have been the turning point in critical opinion (*Marlowe's Doctor Faustus 1604-1616*, edited by W. W. Greg, (Oxford, 1950), pp.7-8). Before this, A. W. Ward (1901), J. Churton Collins (1905), Thomas H. Dickinson (undated), Charles Mills Gayley (1916), and John Bakeless (1942) all subscribed to the opinion that *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* imitates *Doctor Faustus*; since 1950, Kenneth Muir (1963), Daniel Seltzer (1963), and J. A. Lavin (1969) have all concurred with Greg's belief that *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* is the earlier play.

honourable purposes. They go off in search of the "jolly friar", confident that "Bacon shall by his magic do this deed" (i,126-127).

Friar Bacon appears in person at the start of the next scene. Greene immediately characterizes him within the trappings of Oxford: he appears in company "*with* Miles, *his poor scholar, with books under his arm; with them* Burden, Mason, Clement, *three doctors*" (ii,S.D.). Friar Bacon speaks to Miles in Latin, asking for his books of necromancy, thus establishing his learning and his specialization. He speaks to the doctors in stately compliments, and refers to himself merely as "a friar newly stall'd in Brazen-nose" (ii,11). It is Burden who describes Bacon's fame:

> ... Oxford makes report,
> Nay, England, and the court of Henry says
> Th'art making of a brazen head by art,
> (ii,23-25)

and Clement continues:

> ... our academy yields
> A man supposed the wonder of the world;
> For if thy cunning work these miracles,
> England and Europe shall admire thy fame,
> And Oxford shall in characters of brass
> And statues such as were built up in Rome
> Eternize Friar Bacon for his art.
> (ii,37-43)

Thus encouraged, Friar Bacon boasts of his accomplishments, displaying an intimate knowledge of the powers of hell:

> Resolve you, doctors, Bacon can by books
> Make storming Boreas thunder from his cave
> And dim fair Luna to a dark eclipse.
> The great arch-ruler, potentate of hell,
> Trembles, when Bacon bids him or his fiends
> Bow to the force of his pentageron.
> What art can work, the frolic friar knows ...
> And I will strengthen England by my skill.
> (ii,46-58)

The notion of Bacon as a "frolic friar" seems out of place in this dark, magnificent vision, but he soon proves his sense of playfulness as he conjures up the Hostess of Henley to the embarrassment of the sceptical doctor Burden. The emphasis of scene ii, however, is on the future of the brazen head; once Friar Bacon's fame and ability are established, the dramatic structure looks toward the supreme test of Bacon's powers.

In the ensuing scenes Friar Bacon's powers are treated as national resources. King Henry speaks of Friar Bacon's fame in scene iv, and the royal party goes off to Oxford to try him against the visiting magician Vandermast.[59] In scene v the young lords seek out Friar Bacon in Oxford, where his perspicacity inspires Edward's wonder and trust. When Friar Bacon tells him that Lacy is courting Margaret for himself in Fressingfield, the prince begs him for his help. Friar Bacon obliges him in scene vi by making use of his magic "glass prospective" to view the wooing scene in faraway Fressingfield. Bacon himself has no particular motivation in this scene but instead acts on Edward's behest, striking Friar Bungay dumb when he is about to pronounce the wedding ceremony and sending a devil to carry him back to Oxford.[60] In Fressingfield these awful occurrences are immediately recognized as Friar Bacon's doing: "Bacon hath with his devils/ Enchanted him," says Lacy, and Margaret agrees, "Let's hence, for Bacon's spirits be abroad" (vi,155-156,173). Bacon's fame is indeed widespread. His powers are proved without doubt in scene ix, when he intervenes most theatrically in the conjuring competition between Vandermast and Friar Bungay. The two magicians have already debated the merits of pyromancy and geomancy, and are competing in proofs of their skill: Friar Bungay conjures up the golden tree of the garden of Hesperides guarded by a fire-shooting dragon; Vandermast raises up the spirit of Hercules who begins to break the tree's branches, and Bungay's magic is not strong enough to stop him. Vandermast boasts,

> ... to compare with Jacques Vandermast,
> Oxford and Cambridge must go seek their cells
> To find a man to match him in his art.
> (ix,107-109)

With this set-up Friar Bacon enters. "Men call me Bacon," he says laconically, but Vandermast recognizes his true character:

> Lordly thou lookest, as if that thou wert learn'd;
> Thy countenance, as if science held her seat
> Between the circled arches of thy brows.
> (ix,122-124)

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59. Assarsson-Rizzi regards this as a notable feature of Greene's characterization: instead of Friar Bacon offering his services to his king, the king goes to him, thus raising Bacon's status and importance. Assarsson-Rizzi, p.37.

60. Senn remarks that the character of Friar Bacon "is given a truly structural function ... he is a means of fulfilling other people's wishes rather than an active dramatic character himself." Senn, "Source Material", pp.547-548.

This is the play's only description of Friar Bacon's appearance; Greene evidently intends that his powerful abilities should be reflected in his outward dignity. Friar Bacon proves that his powers extend beyond mere learning with his influence over Vandermast's spirit, who refuses to act in Bacon's presence:

> I dare not. Seest thou not great Bacon here,
> Whose frown doth act more than thy magic can?
> ... Bacon, that bridles headstrong Belcephon,
> And rules Asmenoth, guider of the north,
> Binds me from yielding unto Vandermast.
> (ix,136-143)

Friar Bacon secures his supremacy by sending Vandermast back to Germany on the back of his spirit and by conjuring up a lavish feast for his royal guests. The characterization of Friar Bacon is certainly central to the construction of scene ix, but again it is more of a display of the character's meaning than an involvement of the character in dramatic action. No decisions are taken; Friar Bacon's success is never in doubt; Bacon's actions seem preordained, as indeed they are by *The Famous Historie*.

Scene xi dramatizes another visually impressive episode from *The Famous Historie*. It returns to the premise of scene ii that the ultimate test of Friar Bacon's greatness will be the success or failure of the brazen head, which he hopes will give him the necessary information to surround England with a wall of brass. Scene xi adds the background that Friar Bacon has been working at this task for seven years, presumably to give the outcome of the scene greater suspense and importance, although nine scenes have passed since the head was last mentioned, and the audience would probably have forgotten all about it. In any case scene xi returns to a depiction of Friar Bacon as a private individual (as opposed to the public celebrity of scene ix) alone in his scholarly pursuits. The stage directions present "Friar Bacon *drawing the curtains with a white stick, a book in his hand, and a lamp lighted by him, and the* brazen head"; the character is reidentified with the tools of his trade in the intimacy of his study. He tells Miles,

> Bungay and I have watch'd these threescore days,
> And now our vital spirits crave some rest ...
> Now, Miles, in thee rests Friar Bacon's weal;
> The honor and renown of all his life
> Hangs in the watching of this brazen head.
> (xi,21-27)

Assarsson-Rizzi would like to regard this speech as Greene's construction of a major decision which Friar Bacon takes and which determines his "tragic" fate: Bacon foolishly decides to trust Miles to keep watch on the very night that the head will speak.[61] However Greene's script does not dramatize a decision in this scene in the clear, forceful way that important decisions are made in scenes vi, viii, and xiv. Friar Bacon presents only one concern -- that Miles watch carefully; no other alternatives are explored; the decision has already been made. The suspense of the scene lies with Miles and the brazen head; and when Friar Bacon wakes he blames Miles, not himself: "Thy brazen head lies broken through a slave/ That watch'd, and would not when the head did will" (xi,98-99). However, the explosion of the head casts the character of Friar Bacon into new waters; failure has not previously been a part of his character, and it seems to devastate his established identity:

> My life, my fame, my glory, all are past ...
> Hell trembled at my deep, commanding spells;
> Fiends frown'd to see a man their over-match.
> Bacon might boast more than a man might boast,
> But now the braves of Bacon hath an end;
> Europe's conceit of Bacon hath an end;
> His seven years' practice sorteth to ill end.
> (xi,95,109-114)

At the opening of scene xiii Friar Bungay notices that Friar Bacon has changed:

> What means the friar that frolick'd it of late
> To sit as melancholy in his cell
> As if he had neither lost nor won today?
> (xiii,1-3)

Friar Bacon responds that he has fallen into "deep disgrace" at the loss of his brazen head. He seems not to have lost his powers altogether, though, for "by prospective skill" he has learned that the day will be "ominous" (xiii,7,12,13). When the two Scholars arrive, he "smells there will be a tragedy" (xiii,36). After the sudden killings of the young scholars in response to the sight of their duelling fathers, Friar Bacon feels responsible for their tragic fates:

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61. Her argument proceeds from the change which Greene makes in the episode from *The Famous Historie*: in the chronicle Friar Bacon knows that the head will speak sometime, but in Greene's play, Friar Bacon knows that it will speak that very night (xi,30-32). She writes, "Trusting [the foolish Miles] with the task of keeping watch at the crucial moment, Friar Bacon makes a foolish decision, opening the way to his own undoing. ... In this way Greene's Friar Bacon is guilty of a misjudgement through an act of will, a misjudgement that makes him vulnerable and punishable. Is it even possible to trace an influence of the Aristotelian concept of *hamartia*, or reversal as the result of some error or weakness in the character of the tragic hero?" Assarsson-Rizzi, p.30.

Bacon, thy magic doth effect this massacre.
This glass prospective worketh many woes ...
These friendly youths did perish by thine art.
(xiii,75-78)

His regret brings him to a sudden decision to "End all thy magic and thine art at once" (xiii,79). Again Greene couches this self-determination in the second person. (Friar Bacon uses the second person in speaking to himself at only one other occasion, when he acknowledges the failure of the brazen head at xi,96-98.) And again, this decision radically changes the meaning of the character. Friar Bacon's identity as the supreme magician has been taken for granted and endorsed throughout the play, but in scene xiii Friar Bacon smashes his old role along with his magic glass in order to "break the cause efficiat of their woes" (xiii,81).[62] His regret for the harm he has brought on the scholars expands into a religious sorrow for all his sins against God. He continues,

... it repents me sore
That ever Bacon meddled in this art ...
The wresting of the holy name of God,
As Sother, Eloim, and Adonai,
Alpha, Manoth, and Tetragrammaton,
With praying to the five-fold powers of heaven,
Are instances that Bacon must be damn'd
For using devils to countervail his God.
(xiii,85-97)

But this despair leads Friar Bacon to a new decision regarding his life (again in the second person):

Yet Bacon, cheer thee; drown not in despair.
Sins have their slaves. Repentance can do much.
Think Mercy sits where Justice holds her seat ...
To wash the wrath of high Jehovah's ire,
And make thee as a new-born babe from sin.
Bungay, I'll spend the remnant of my life
In pure devotion, praying to my God
That he would save what Bacon vainly lost.
(xiii,98-108)

With this he claims a new identity as a penitent. This change in character is fundamental to *The Famous Historie*, which sums up Friar Bacon in its closing sentence, "Thus was the Life and Death of this famous Fryer, who lived most part of his life a Magician, and dyed a true Penitent Sinner, and an Anchorite" (p.328). Greene does not go so far as to make Friar Bacon an anchorite, as he wants to bring him on for the final

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62. Compare this with Prospero breaking his magic staff along with his renunciation of his art in *The Tempest*.

wedding scene to make his mystical prophecy of England's future. Yet amidst the celebration of scene xvi Friar Bacon is noticeably "mute" (xvi,35); and he reiterates his rejection of his former character, explaining that he is

> Repentant for the follies of my youth,
> That magic's secret mysteries misled.
> (xvi,36-37)

If Greene had devised *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* on a purely narrative structure Friar Bacon's metamorphosis might seem unnecessary. His repentance is only generated by the deaths of the two boys -- the rest of the play's society admires and respects Bacon's powers -- and the abrupt inclusion of the boys appears glaringly arbitrary. Friar Bacon might have remained a visually exciting secondary character, enabling the narrative sequence of other characters' actions. But Greene's interest in the character reflects other concerns. Friar Bacon as the magician has special theatrical appeal for the playwright in justifying spectacular visual effects and an unusually condensed scene structure (in showing two separate actions at once in scenes vi and xiii). But Friar Bacon as the penitent also has a particular resonance for Greene.[63] Many of Greene's prose works involve the repentance of a prodigal: Pharicles in *Mamillia*, the eponymous *Arbasto*, Philador in *The Mourning Garment*, Francesco in *Never Too Late*, the prostitute in *A Disputation between a He Connycatcher and a She Connycatcher*, Ned Browne in *The Blacke Booke's Messenger* (also known as *The Repentance of a Connycatcher*), Roberto in *A Groatworth of Wit*, and the autobiographical deathbed *Repentance of Robert Greene*.[64] In drama, too, Greene explores the motif with the mass repentance and reformation in the fifth act of *A Looking Glass for London and England*, and in the penitence of *James IV*. Some of these repentance scenes might seem to modern readers too tragic for transplanting into a comedy, but the development of Christian comedies (like the prodigal son plays) had made a heartfelt confession and repentance a conventional feature of the genre. In the so-called "Christian Terence" tradition the reunion of sinner and God (often translated into the figure of a father or teacher) supplants the classical reunion of lovers to fulfil the comic resolution. The reunion of the penitent Misogonus and his forgiving father Philogonus in

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63. Senn, *Greene and Peele*, p.122. See also Dickinson, p.xvi.
64. See J. Dover Wilson, "*Euphues* and the Prodigal Son", *The Library* 10 (1909) 337-361, for a discussion of the motif of the prodigal in Elizabethan prose romances. See also Richard Helgerson, *The Elizabethan Prodigals* (Berkeley, 1976).

Misogonus is a good example of a happy ending in this tradition.[65] In this sense the dynamism of Friar Bacon's character is conventional, far more so than the dynamism of the lovers, who in classical tradition do not require spiritual or emotional development to surmount the material obstacles that block their ultimate union. In *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* Greene is able to employ both conventions in his ending: the true lovers, Margaret and Lacy, are happily married, and the sinner, Friar Bacon, repents of his wickedness and returns to the true faith. With these various layers Greene creates emotional depth in his comic resolution. The spiritual reformation of Friar Bacon's character adds another dimension to the final epiphany, along with the transforming love of Lacy and Margaret and the ennobling magnanimity of Edward and Eleanor. The spirit, the emotions, and the state are all reborn in Greene's comic conclusion, which thereupon looks to a mystical future.

For this purpose Greene develops the characterization of the traditional magician. Although he makes full use of the spectacular potential of the conjuror, he heightens Friar Bacon's pride and arrogance and darkens his contacts with devils and the underworld far beyond the characterization in *The Famous Historie*.[66] This characterization helps to motivate the dramatic episode of Friar Bacon's metamorphosis from Magician to "true Penitent Sinner". The dynamism of the characterization raises Friar Bacon to the dramatic level of the three other main characters; he is not just a dazzling figure out of romance tradition, but he is an individual figure of conscience and self-determination. The characterization of Friar Bacon confirms Greene's dramatic interest in the motivation, independence and self-determination of his characters.

Four other characters change meaning during the play. The narrative dictates the dramatic identities of Lambert, Serlsby, and their two sons as they change from friends to enemies to corpses: Greene does not attempt to show these characters choosing their fates. All four are introduced late in the play, and their individualization suffers accordingly. Lambert and Serlsby appear for the first time in scene x. Although their inclusion is

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65. See Chapter 4.

66. Assarsson-Rizzi, pp.36-40. See also Lavin, p.xxix, Seltzer, p.xii, and Frank Towne, "'White Magic' in *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*?", *Modern Language Notes* 67 (1952) 9-13, for a discussion of Friar Bacon's use of black magic. Lavin writes, "[Greene] chose black magic rather than science; this allowed him to have both a moral conclusion and exciting stage effects."

unexpected, it nevertheless fits into the established scenario of Margaret as the flower of Suffolk, wooed by all (iii,67). However, their duelling passion arises terribly suddenly. Margaret has asked for ten days to consider her reply to their proposals when Serlsby bursts out,

> Lambert, I tell thee thou art importunate;
> Such beauty fits not such a base esquire.
> It is for Serlsby to have Margaret.
> **LAMBERT.**
> Think'st thou with wealth to over-reach me?
> Serlsby, I scorn to brook thy country braves.
> I dare thee, coward, to maintain this wrong
> At dint of rapier, single in the field.
> (x,79-85)

When we next see them in scene xiii their weapons are drawn and the fight is on. Their two sons, Scholars 1 and 2, are introduced even more abruptly into the play in scene xiii. The majority of the scholars' lines are given over to explaining the fact of their existence and Friar Bacon's policy of offering his magic glass to all comers. As soon as the boys are satisfactorily established, Greene kills them off: they have only eleven speeches between them to move from friendship and filial affection to dismay to violent, vengeful anger. Although the characterizations of the Lamberts and the Serlsbys are distressingly arbitrary, their character dynamism in their transition from life to death is important to Greene's organization of the second half of the play. Empson and Assarsson-Rizzi regard their two scenes as crucial in joining the Friar Bacon subplot to the Margaret story.[67] Having decided to keep *The Famous Historie* episode of Friar Bacon's disillusionment and repentance, Greene needs victims to inspire his change of heart. The two scholars are lifted straight from *The Famous Historie*; Greene's real alteration is in attaching the duelling fathers to Margaret. Their connection with her is causally unnecessary (the fathers could remain the shadowy figures of *The Famous Historie*) but analogically rich in linking Margaret with Bacon and Lambert and Serlsby with Edward and Lacy. The implications of these seemingly arbitrary deaths thus begin to filter through the whole of the play.

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67. Empson, *Some Versions*, pp.32-33; also William Empson, "The Function of the Double Plot", in *Shakespeare's Contemporaries*, ed. Max Bluestone and Norman Rabkin (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1970), pp.42-46, p.45. Assarsson-Rizzi, pp.61-62,90-91.

The dynamism of characters, then, is fundamental to the dramatic structure of *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*. This becomes obvious when one scans the cast list and compares the bound characters (those who perform necessary action in the bare causal sequence of the play's story) with the dynamic characters (those whose values change during the play). (See Figure 9.) With only one exception, all the bound characters are also dynamic, and the free characters are static.[68]

Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay is unprecedented for an English comedy in its structural dependence on character dynamism.[69] Certainly *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* is not Plautine -- there are no coincidences, discoveries or surprising recognitions to propel the characters' choices and actions; nor is it romantic in the sense of fantastic, extraordinary circumstances driving the characters. And *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* is considerably more complex than the moral comedies like *Misogonus* which led to the predictable, if often unmotivated, reform of an erring character. *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* does not employ a moral dialectic in its characterization; unlike Greene's other plays, it has no clear-cut villain. By eschewing these traditional means of directing the course of the dramatic action, Greene attempts to create an illusion of self-reliant characters who choose their own identities and fates. While Greene follows Lylian models in several aspects of the play he employs dynamic characterization much more emotionally and effectively than Lyly ever did.

Structural Relationships

Greene highlights his main, dynamic characters by focusing the other, minor characterizations to reflect on the central figures. *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*'s use of differential characterization is sometimes implicit and sometimes stated outright; it draws parallels between the values of characters at times and points out differences at others, but constantly refers back to the characterizations at the centre of Greene's scheme.

Greene's use of the country characters, for example, throws the dramatic emphasis back onto the heroine, Margaret. In scene iii the characters Thomas, Joan, and Richard not only provide a festive background for Margaret's first entrance and her meeting with

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68. The action of the Post, who brings Lacy's letter of severance to Margaret, is essential to the consequent narrative developments, but his value as a character is unimportant.
69. Assarsson-Rizzi, p.128.

CHARACTER	BOUND	FREE	STATIC	DYNAMIC
EDWARD	B			D
LACY	B			D
WARREN		F	S	
ERMSBY		F	S	
RAFE		F	S	
BACON	B			D
MILES		F	S	
BURDEN		F	S	
MASON		F	S	
CLEMENT		F	S	
HOSTESS		F	S	
DEVIL		F	S	
MARGARET	B			D
THOMAS		F	S	
RICHARD		F	S	
JOAN		F	S	
K. HENRY		F	S	
EMPEROR		F	S	
CASTILE		F	S	
ELEANOR	(B)		S	
VANDERMAST		F	S	
BUNGAY	(B)		S	
CONSTABLE		F	S	
SAXONY		F	S	
HERCULES		F	S	
LAMBERT	B			D
SERLSBY	B			D
KEEPER		F	S	
POST	B		S	
SCHOLAR 1	B			D
SCHOLAR 2	B			D
FRIEND		F	S	

Figure 9
Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay
Characters in Relation to Narrative

Lacy; through association they also endow her character with high spirits, wholesome values, and a sense of friendly fellowship. Similarly the introduction of Margaret's father, the Keeper, in scene x reiterates the values of generosity and abundance associated with Margaret. By their presence the rustics demonstrate that Margaret is extraordinary -- she is more than a common country girl. Greene achieves this distinction primarily though verbal style: where Thomas says of the sunshine, "here's a weather to make a man call his father whoreson" (iii,1-2), Margaret says, "Phoebus is blithe, and frolic looks from heaven/ ... As when he courted lovely Semele," (iii,14-15). Margaret's diction is certainly unrealistic for a dairy maid,[70] but it contributes to the notion of her extraordinary nobility.[71]

Similarly Greene uses various secondary characters to build up the characterization of Friar Bacon as uniquely learned and powerful. This is the main function of the three doctors, Burden, Mason, and Clement: to show that even the learned men of Oxford bow to Friar Bacon's extraordinary talents. The revelation of Burden's furtive affair with the Hostess of Henley is entertaining, but Greene stresses the primary theme of Friar Bacon's power over the minor incident of Burden's discomfiture.

> Thus, rulers of our academic state,
> You have seen the friar frame his art by proof.
> (ii,163-4)

Friar Bungay and Vandermast likewise contribute to Friar Bacon's characterization by bowing to his superior powers. Both of these magicians appear in *The Famous Historie* in similar subordinate roles. Fryer Bacon introduces Bungay as "my inferior"; he "was a great scholler and a magician, (but not to bee compared to Fryer Bacon)" (p.306). In Greene's play Friar Bacon's superiority is obvious, especially when he strikes Bungay dumb with his magic in scene vi. The conjuring competition between Friar Bungay and Vandermast is also taken, in a slightly altered form, from *The Famous Historie*. The outcome in both forms is the same; Vandermast's conjuring is stronger than Friar Bungay's, but Friar Bacon's magic is mightier than both. Greene maintains the chronicle episode's aim of celebrating Friar Bacon's supremacy in an international arena. To this

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70. See also Seltzer, p.xviii; and Kenneth Muir, "Robert Greene as a Dramatist", in *Essays on Shakespeare and Elizabethan Drama in Honour of Hardin Craig*, edited by Richard Hosley (London, 1963), pp.45-54, p.49.
71. Assarsson-Rizzi, p.100.

end he expands the characterization of Vandermast. The German boasts of his triumphs at the greatest universities of the day:[72]

> I have given nonplus to the Paduans,
> To them of Sien, Florence, and Bologna,
> Reimes, Louvain, and fair Rotherdam,
> Frankford, Utrech, and Orleans;
> And now must Henry, if he do me right,
> Crown me with laurel, as they all have done.
> (ix,110-115)

With this impertinent speech Greene sets up Friar Bacon's entrance, which follows immediately. The effect is that when Friar Bacon triumphs, all the fame and glory asserted in Vandermast's characterization are displaced onto him.[73] They are transferred as well from Germany, as embodied by the Emperor, to England, in the person of King Henry, who says,

> Bacon, thou hast honored England with thy skill,
> And made fair Oxford famous by thine art;
> I will be English Henry to thyself.
> (ix,165-167)[74]

Friar Bacon commands Vandermast's spirit with such ease and sends him off to Germany so casually that it is clear that there is no contest between the two magicians. This would seem to indicate that Greene is interested in Vandermast not as an agent but as a subsidiary element of Friar Bacon's characterization.[75]

The characters of the devils and the spirits also contribute to Friar Bacon's characterization as evidence of his skill. The devil who fetches the Hostess of Henley in scene ii, the devil who carries off Friar Bungay in scene vi, Hercules in scene ix, and the devil of scene xv all attest to Friar Bacon's meaning as a conjuror. They are also appendages of Friar Bacon's character in that they enable the physical completion of his actions (for example, Friar Bacon wills the break-up of the wedding ceremony in scene vi but his devil is the one who takes Friar Bungay away). Of course the appearances and

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72. James Dow McCallum suggests that the disputation scene may have been inspired by the public debates of the famous and arrogant Italian scholar, Giordano Bruno, who visited Oxford in 1583. Since Vandermast is German, not Italian, the character is probably not a specific caricature, but perhaps Greene's arrogant characterization would have suggested a recognizable type to the academics in the audience. See "Greene's *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*", *Modern Language Notes* 35 (1920) 212-217, 212.

73. Assarsson-Rizzi, p.42.

74. Mortenson, p.205.

75. Greene omits the later episodes in *The Famous Historie* which describe Vandermast's attempts to revenge himself on Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay. However, *John of Bordeaux, or the Second Part of Friar Bacon* revives the character of Vandermast, still angry from his treatment in *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*. Vandermast's revenge in *John of Bordeaux* differs from the incidents in *The Famous Historie*.

movements of the spirits are theatrically exciting in themselves, and this is almost certainly their primary reason for inclusion, but as well the structure ties them inextricably to the character of Friar Bacon and the dramatic focus of his expanding characterization.

Miles and Rafe, the two clown characters of *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, have privileged positions in the scheme of the play. They exist first and foremost for the appeal of their characterizations, and Greene invests considerable effort and stage time in milking as much humour as possible out of their traditional roles. Rafe is one of the first professional fools to appear on the Tudor stage, but his characterization places him squarely in the tradition of the morality Vice.[76] Rafe encourages Edward's lustful inclinations with suggestions for plots and intrigues in scene i and disguises himself as the prince in scenes v and vii;[77] these actions recall the Vice's plots and deceits. As well Rafe inherits the Vice's verbal antics; his malaproprisms, topsy-turvy proverbs, and ridiculous comparisons all amuse while they subvert linguistic order. Rafe speaks prose and has the unexpected quality of making other characters speak prose with him. Edward, Lacy, Warren, Ermsby, King Henry and the Duke of Castile all descend from their usual verse to banter with Rafe. This may indicate the stage primacy which Greene envisioned for the part. His theatrical dominanace, his verbal and moral subversiveness, and his function as a source of humour all recall the traditional Vice character.

Unlike Rafe, the character of Miles is drawn from *The Famous Historie*. The chronicle says, "Fryer Bacon had one onely man to attend on him and he too was none of the wisest, for he kept him in charity, more then for any service he had of him" (p.291). Greene preserves this characterization in his sketch of Miles as a traditional dunce. For the most part he speaks prose, but in scenes vii and ix he bursts into Skeltonic doggerel. Greene's contemporary George Puttenham tells us that Skeltonic verse "sheweth a certaine lightnesse either of the matter or of the makers head ... commonly more commodiously uttered by these buffons or vices in playes then by any other person."[78] Into Miles' prose

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76. Assarsson-Rizzi, p.66.
77. Frank R. Ardolino notes the resemblance of Rafe Simnell's impersonation with that of young Lambert Simnell, who was induced to impersonate Edward, the young Earl of Warwick, in an attempt to unseat Henry VII in 1487 in "Robert Greene's Use of the Lambert Simnell Imposture in *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*", *American Notes & Queries* 20 (1981) 37-39.
78. George Puttenham, *The Arte of English Poesie*, edited by Gladys Doidge Willcock and Alice Walker (Cambridge, 1936), pp.83-84. See also Assarsson-Rizzi, p.106.

and doggerel Greene interweaves Latin words and phrases. This locates him within the Oxford academic community (especially in ii,1-5 and v,24-36) and appeals to an English comic tradition of bastardized Latin.[79] Greene makes Miles' Latin especially comic by inserting it on the heavy beats of the Skeltonics for nonsensical rhymes:

> By your leave, *nobile decus*, for here comes Doctor Bacon's *pecus*,
> Being his full age, to carry a mess of pottage.
> (ix,221-222)

Miles also practices the "aside" and addresses the audience directly which places him, like Rafe, in the stage tradition of vice characters. Miles also takes the Vice's role of mocking authority, learning and retribution, and his awkward laying of the table in scene ix ("God knows I am as serviceable as a sow is under an apple tree," ix,212-213) recalls a similar bit of stage business for the vice in *Cambyses*. His exit to hell on the back of a devil was a traditional fate for the Vice.[80] In Miles' verbal characterization one can see Greene calling on theatrical traditions particularly clearly: the Skeltonics conjure up associations of a fool or buffoon; the Latin calls upon the incorrigible boy servant; the direct address recalls the vice.

Although neither Miles nor Rafe is absolutely essential for the basic causal sequence of the play's story, they are indispensable features of its plot. Each is tied to one of the main characters -- Miles to Friar Bacon and Rafe to Edward -- and each serves as comic ballast to the rather serious, even potentially tragic intentions and actions of their masters.[81] Greene strikes an original note in opposing the dynamic characters of Edward and Friar Bacon with the constant foolish roles of Rafe and Miles; more typically in classical and neoclassical comedy the stable, static master is amused or tricked by the quicksilver transformations of the foolish servant (as in the relationship between Philogonus and Cacurgus in *Misogonus*). In scene xii Rafe reminds the assembled company of Edward's changeability: "Never believe him ... his love is like unto a tapster's glass that is broken with every touch" (xii,68-72); yet Rafe remains himself even in disguise. Rafe's presence has the sanguine effect of keeping Edward's character in a comic

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79. Udall's Merygreeke satirized the Latin funeral service in *Roister Doister*, and Lyly's plays are full of pert boys bandying Latin phrases and puns.
80. See, for example, Ulpian Fulwell's *Like Will to Like* in *Tudor Interludes*, edited by Peter Happé (Harmondsworth, 1972), pp.319-364.
81. Senn, "Source Materials", p.548.

mode in scenes i and v. Rafe initiates the plan for Edward to use magic to win Margaret, and the exchange of clothing between the prince and the fool reminds the audience that they pursue an essentially foolish, ignoble endeavour.[82] However, once the characters are separated in scenes vi and viii Greene's presentation of Edward becomes much more serious and both his impulse to violence and his magnanimous decision are given considerable dramatic weight.

Similarly the character of Miles grounds Friar Bacon's pride and ambition in humorous terms.[83] Although Miles is consistently confident in his master's abilities, his ignorance and lack of understanding provide a happy alternative to Friar Bacon's arch-seriousness and pride, as in this encounter from scene ii:

> **BACON.**
> Burden, thou wrong'st me in detracting thus;
> Bacon loves not to stuff himself with lies.
> But tell me 'fore these doctors, if thou dare,
> Of certain questions I shall move to thee.
> **BURDEN.**
> I will; ask what thou can.
> **MILES.**
> Marry, sir, he'll be straight on your pick-pack to know whether the feminine or the masculine gender be most worthy.
> (ii,84-91)

Similarly in scene xi Miles undercuts the seriousness of the brazen head with his physical comic business of arming himself against it, falling asleep, bumping his head, and pricking himself. He dismisses Friar Bacon's warnings and charges with a casual "So. I thought you would talk yourself asleep anon" (xi,39). Miles obviously serves as a foil for the character of Friar Bacon, yet their association also implies some inherent foolishness in the friar's enterprise. The separation of the two characters after scene xi reflects back on Friar Bacon's dynamic characterization, suggesting that in his transformation Friar Bacon has abandoned ignorance and chosen true wisdom. Miles, on the other hand, is absent from the tragedy of scene xiii and thus remains unrepentant and unchanged in order to meet damnation with the gleeful silliness of scene xv.[84]

Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay focuses secondary characters towards the primary characterizations through implicit structural links and parallels as well as through the

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82. Senn, *Greene and Peele*, p.121.
83. See Empson, *Some Versions*, pp.33-34.
84. Hieatt, "Multiple Plotting", p.33.

acknowledged dramatic relationships. For instance, the conflict between Lambert and Serlsby over Margaret in scenes x and xiii recalls the earlier confrontation between Lacy and Edward.[85] The magic glass is used to view each situation, but the magic glass scene developing out of the earlier competition as a "comedy" (vi,48) is repeated in the second conflict as a "tragedy" (xiii,36).[86]

Empson also regards the dramatic logic of the Lambert-Serlsby episode as contributing to the primary characterizations, although he discerns a different focus: "this is the repetition of a situation with new characters to show all its possibilities ... But its main use is to compare [Margaret] to Bacon... His magic is somehow the same as Margaret's magic, which has also killed all four."[87] This structural comparison of Margaret's and Friar Bacon's responsibilities is borne out by the ensuing parallel action of their respective turns towards religious penitence.[88] In scenes x and xiv Margaret renounces her worldliness and vanity and vows to become a nun; in scene xiii Friar Bacon likewise repents of his blasphemy and sin and commits himself to a life of religious devotion.[89] This repetition of action by different characters recalls the analogical plotting of Lyly's comedy *Endimion*, in which five characters suffer from unrequited love, and three fall into a sleep because of it.[90] But where Lyly contrives contrasting, differential meanings between the romantic, heroic lover, Endimion, the mortal, satirical lover, Corsites, and the farcical lover, Sir Tophas, Greene leaves the relation between the characters of Margaret and Friar Bacon in a simple, formal analogy: A is like B.[91] The comparison cannot bear close scrutiny, however; Margaret's beauty is rewarded with a marriage into the nobility, whereas Friar Bacon's magic fails and is abandoned; Friar Bacon is conscious and remorseful of the deaths his powers have brought on, while

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85. See Senn, "Source Materials", p.553.
86. Mortenson, p.199.
87. Empson, *Some Versions*, pp.32-33. See also Hieatt, "Multiple Plotting", p.20.
88. Assarsson-Rizzi, p.86.
89. Senn, *Greene and Peele*, p.83. Empson, *Some Versions*, p.32. See also Lavin, pp.xxvi-xxvii.
90. See Chapter 5.
91. See Levin's analysis of the relations of plot lines in "The Unity of Elizabethan Multiple-Plot Drama", and in "The Elizabethan 'Three-Level' Play", *Renaissance Drama* 2 (1969) 23-37. See also Empson, *Some Versions*, p.33.

Margaret remains ignorant and unrepentant of the fates of her country suitors. Margaret's turn to religion is short-lived; Friar Bacon's, it seems, will endure.[92]

The repeated master-fool relationship in the characterizations of Edward and Rafe, Friar Bacon and Miles promotes another structural comparison. These characters are already connected by the narrative, but Greene draws an independent relationship as well. "Both Edward and Bacon are seen indulging in presumptuous projects," writes Werner Senn;[93] each is accompanied by colleagues and each appoints a foolish substitute for himself.[94] Here again Greene leaves the analogy in its simplest form, without making any distinction between high and low, comic and serious modes to alter the audience's response. The repetition of the motif simply drives the audience towards an association of the dynamic meanings of the characters of Edward and Friar Bacon. Having seen Edward separate himself from his folly (in the person of Rafe in scene vi and in his own change of heart in scene viii), the audience will receive Friar Bacon's conversion in scenes xi and xiii with the added resonance of the earlier transformation. In this sense one might say that Greene constructs Edward's role within the first half of the play in order to predicate Friar Bacon's more extended characterization.

The play's two weddings draw another parallel between the characters involved. Lacy and Edward have a clearly defined relationship within the premises of the story, but Margaret does not encounter Eleanor until scene xvi; the relationship between the two brides is primarily structural.[95] One of the premises of Margaret's character is that her extraordinary beauty raises her out of her humble class background and makes her the social equal of her noble suitors. The character of the princess bolsters this notion of Margaret's natural nobility by balancing the milkmaid's role in the action: they are both associated with the love of a prince; both are characterized with similar classical allusions;[96] and they appear side by side and share the compliments of the wedding scene. To be sure, the wedding scene focuses on Eleanor ("Europa") and Edward ("England") for

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92. Senn and Hieatt regard these dissimilarities as provoking a confused response to the Margaret-Friar Bacon analogy. Senn, "Source Materials", p.553. Hieatt, "Multiple Plotting", p.33.
93. Senn, "Source Materials", p.551. See also Mortenson, p.200.
94. Senn, *Greene and Peele*, p.83.
95. Senn, *Greene and Peele*, p.83.
96. Emily B. Stanley, "The Use of Classical Mythology by the University Wits", *Renaissance Papers* 3 (1956) 25-33, 29.

the sake of the glorification of England's future,[97] but in the overall scheme of the play Eleanor's character contributes to Margaret's characterization as well. This radical social statement gives still more prominence to Greene's heroine.

In structural parallels and analogies, then, as well as in the dramatized relationships, Greene emphasizes the central dynamic characters. The organization of *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* thus follows a schematic use of characters more indebted to morality tradition than to classical or neoclassical comedy. That is, the smaller roles are often free and unnecessary for the completion of the play's action (as opposed to the causal importance of the bound minor characters in *Miles Gloriosus* or *Roister Doister*); they are more usually employed in contributory functions as background for the expanding, dynamic characterizations which form the central core of the drama (much in the same way as the minor characters provide the moral context for the central characters' actions in *Misogonus*).

CONTRADICTIONS AND PARADOXES

Like Lyly, Greene seems to offer humorous characterizations as delights for popular theatrical appetites, regardless of the play's larger narrative concerns. He spaces the appearances of Rafe and Miles fairly evenly across the play and creates specific situations in which to show the clowns in their best light (for example, Rafe's drunken pomp in scene vii and Miles' encounter with the devil in scene xv). Technically, then, Greene uses the traditional characterizations in much the same way as he employs visual spectacle -- for specifically theatrical effect.

This theatrical use of static characterization exists in *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* side by side with the dynamic characterization which forms the structure of the narrative. Greene manages to keep the two modes of characterization separate for most of the play in his alternating scene structure, which moves back and forth from the dramatic, dynamic concerns of the love story to the more static, theatrical displays of the royal pageantry, the clowns' foolery, and Friar Bacon's magic (until it becomes a dynamic quality).

Nonetheless, the conflicting values of traditional comic conventions and Greene's new interest in self-determining, developing characters do occasionally collide. Dickinson

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97. Mortenson, p.205.

praises Greene's characterization in *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* for "the introduction of realism onto a stage that was essentially romantic,"[98] but Assarsson-Rizzi warns that "The line separating individuality of character from those characteristics associated with the stock type is not always obvious."[99] The problems arise when, having expanded a character into an expression of emotional depth or complexity, Greene compresses it back into a stereotypical formula. For example, Edward's immoral desires and designs are suppressed entirely after scene viii, when the character is transformed from an emotional individual to a princely figurehead. The earlier identifications of Edward with Tarquin are replaced by safer allusions to Phoebus and Paris. Yet Edward's earlier character makes for a hollow centre to the royal wedding; as Rafe says to Eleanor, "never believe him you though he swears he loves you" (xii,68-69). J. A. Lavin complains of Edward's moral ambiguity in the play,[100] but Charles Mills Gayley is blunter: "Edward is as moral as a jelly-fish."[101]

Friar Bacon's conversion has likewise met with scepticism from the critics. His sudden conviction of the destructiveness of magic reverses the character which Greene has been at some pains to establish, a character who derives respect, fame, and national glory from his supernatural skills. The reversal is of course predicated in *The Famous Historie*. Nevertheless, Assarsson-Rizzi feels that the dramatic meaning of Friar Bacon's character is sacrificed to a didactic convention:

> ... his repentance seems to lack inner motivation. In other words, the dramatist's moral aim is not consistent with the character he has created, but appears to be superimposed upon him ... the playwright is forced to give up the characterization of Friar Bacon that, up to this point, he has handled with considerable skill.[102]

Lavin also regards Friar Bacon's transformation as problematic; he believes the "incomplete artistic integration" of the character comes from the playwright's wavering between the convention of the benevolent enchanter, and a more tragic impulse towards Faustian ambition.[103]

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98. Dickinson, p.lxiv.
99. Assarsson-Rizzi, p.123.
100. Lavin, p.xxix.
101. Gayley, p.430.
102. Assarsson-Rizzi, p.86.
103. Lavin, p.xxix.

This tension between the individualized character and the conventional type can be seen in Margaret's character as well. Lacy's unmotivated testing of Margaret's fidelity has bothered many readers. Greene's use of the familiar Patient Griselda episode extends the story beyond the resolution of scene viii. It also demonstrates the virtue of Margaret's character within an accepted Elizabethan ideal, in order to justify the break from decorum in the match with Lacy.[104] However, Margaret has already proved her mettle in scene viii, in which she stands up to Prince Edward and vows to die rather than renounce her love. That Lacy requires further proof of her constancy seems to belittle him as an appropriate lover for the high-spirited heroine. And when Margaret accepts without a murmur the explanation for Lacy's heart-breaking letter, "'Twas but to try sweet Peggy's constancy," (xiv,73), and takes him back because "when he comes with his enchanting face,/ Whatso'er betide, I cannot say him nay" (xiv,87-88), modern readers may feel disappointed in her sudden loss of spirit. Our twentieth-century predisposition towards psychologically motivated drama may lead us to mistake Greene's emblematic dramaturgy for bad writing. Charles Hieatt for one believes that in giving up her religious vocation for Lacy "[Margaret] sinks from a noble heroine to a doting, weak-willed girl who cannot resist Lacy's 'enchanting face,' despite his new take-it-or-leave-it attitude."[105] Margaret's independent characterization seems to disappear within the conventional comic formula of the reunion of lovers for a happy ending. Kenneth Muir writes, "again character has been sacrificed to plot. Margaret is an uneasy compromise between two conventions; but the critics treat her as though she were as three-dimensional as a character in a novel and praise her for qualities she does not possess."[106]

Greene's dynamic innovations in his characterizations of Margaret, Edward, and Friar Bacon all seem to be dogged by an inherent inconsistency with the narrative conventions in which they function. Regarding this issue, Madeleine Doran writes,

> Too much motivation of character is perhaps liable to give more trouble in romantic comedy than too little. That is, the conventions of the romantic story can be taken for their own sakes, without much explicit motivation in character.[107] ...

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104. For insights into Greene's use of the Griselda motif see Pettet, p.64; Seltzer, pp.xvii-xviii; Mortenson, p.201. See also Chapter 3 regarding Udall's use of the Griselda motif in his characterization of Christian Custance.

105. Hieatt, "Multiple Plotting", p.33.

106. Muir, p.50.

107. Madeleine Doran, *Endeavors of Art* (Madison, 1954), p.364.

> Sometimes the individualizing touch ... is in excess of the demands of the story and embarrasses the improbabilities of the fable, especially when the other characters merely fulfil their plot function; so Julia seems to sort ill with Proteus [in *Two Gentlemen of Verona*]..."[108]

These are the pitfalls of Greene's characterization in *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*; Greene is nowhere dramatizing realistic characters, yet Margaret and Edward have enough individuality to make us question their docile conformity with romantic convention. Whether Tudor audiences would have seen discrepancies between the characters and the action is another matter. Since they came to the theatre without our expectations of realistic psychological motivation, Greene's sporadic use of dynamic characterization might have seemed dazzlingly emotional and insightful. The Tudor audiences also brought with them a greater familiarity with Greene's narrative and dramatic conventions, and standard motifs like the prince's reform and the magician's penitence might well have been accepted without question.[109]

Also we must remember that medieval romance lies behind *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* and its episodic structure, and it may be that the disjunction of that traditional format would of necessity disrupt any single, consistent character motivation. Norman Sanders suggests that Greene constructs his characterization episode by episode for the demands of specific situations, rather than attempting to continue a consistent characterization across the changing requirements of the entire play. In "The Comedy of Greene and Shakespeare" Sanders writes that Shakespeare, like Greene,

> ... seems deliberately to sacrifice consistency in characterization to some overall effect -- particularly in his final scenes. One reason for this is that in his comedy, unlike his tragedy, the psychology of individual characters is much less important than what may be termed the psychology of the immediate emotional situation ... Shakespeare seems to aim at momentary conviction rather than overall consistency in his comic characters, and Greene's method of portraying characters is similar to Shakespeare's in this respect.[110]

Sanders goes on to consider the complaints of inconsistency in *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* and concludes that they miss the point of Greene's multifarious construction:

> There is no consistency in such characterization, nor was any intended. Margaret acts in accordance with the demands of the situations which are arranged and varied by the playwright to embody his comic vision of love as entertainingly and as completely as possible.[111]

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108. Doran, p.347.
109. See Senn, *Greene and Peele*, p.35.
110. Sanders, p.45.
111. Sanders, p.49.

Sanders is convinced that convention overrules characterization; Doran is less certain, and suspects that unruly characterization may spoil the traditional pleasures of conventions; but both recognize the tension between these elements that exists in the new, dynamic experiments in comic characterization. Senn's assertion that "[if] Greene sacrificed character to plot, such a procedure is the rule rather than the exception in this kind of dramaturgy" may be true, but he fails to notice that Greene is inventing "this kind of dramaturgy" as he goes along.[112] The neoclassical tradition of comedy dictates that characters will be manipulated by the narrative structure, but Greene changes these rules: not only does he subvert the dominance of the narrative structure with multiple plot lines and episodic scenes, he also creates the illusion of a few characters who exist above the narrative, characters who seem, at least fleetingly, to have control over their fates and meanings in the play. Only when characters appear to be independent and individual do we consider their conformity to conventional narrative demands a "sacrifice". No one complains of Eleanor being sacrificed to the possibly untrustworthy Edward; nor does one object very much to the deaths of Lambert, Serlsby, and their sons, although these characters are certainly "sacrificed" to narrative demands. Yet it is difficult not to resist Margaret's simplistic reunion with Lacy -- we expect more from her, and feel that Greene has abandoned her established character.

Greene's insertion of dynamic, developing characters into the comic scenario, then, is one of his most influential innovations in the English drama. With *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* an illusion of individual psychology and emotional depth begins to infiltrate the many romantic and comic conventions invoked. To be sure, this is not a sweeping change; most of the characters are static stock types, and Greene employs many familiar motifs -- among them the conflict between love and friendship, the love triangle, the beautiful country girl, the benevolent enchanter, Patient Griselda, the penitent sinner, and the royal wedding. Greene has the taste of the popular theatre clearly in view and happily provides his audience with its comic conventions, along with magical effects, gorgeous spectacle, and the verbal antics of clowns.

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112. Senn, p.120.

Yet characterization lies at the heart of this multifarious play. As Una Ellis-Fermor remarks, the sensitivity that Greene shows for individual motivation and emotion in *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* marks his maturity as a dramatist and his major influence on his contemporaries. Greene's "pervasive genius," she writes, "lay in his insight into human motive, his clear sense of certain values in human conduct, and in the language and sweetness of verbal music which were their fitting images."[113] But not only does Greene sympathetically portray the emotional life of his stock types, he makes their dynamic self-determination the keystone of his dramatic structure. As I have shown, most of the primary characters bound to the narrative of *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* are also bound to dynamic characterizations. The four main characters, Friar Bacon, Margaret, Edward, and Lacy, each arrive at independent decisions which determine their subsequent identity in the play. This is a radical development. No extant English comedy before this one shows the same structural commitment to the illusion of independent, individual characters. Likewise the analogical construction of *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* is an innovation on the extant Tudor comedy. Greene adopts the Lylian method of associating characters through implicit, structural relationships, yet he does so without constructing an allegory. This is a simplification of the Lylian form, but it heralds the structure of English comedy which flowered at the turn of the seventeenth century and has persisted until the present day: a secular comedy with human characters that not only function as narrative agents but that provide independent dramatic values in their characterized personalities.

The tendency towards a more naturalistic presentation of characters was, however, a challenge to comic tradition and could not be assimilated in a single script. As we have seen, Greene's characterization contains various contradictions and paradoxes. Even in the plays of Shakespeare, perhaps the most naturalistic of Greene's Tudor successors, the tension between individual characterization and formal plotting is evident in the comic structure. We can see the conflicting comic priorities of Tudor dramaturgy of the 1590s particularly clearly in the last play of this discussion, Shakespeare's self-conscious *Love's Labour's Lost*.

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113. Una Ellis-Fermor, "Marlowe and Greene: A Note on their Relations as Dramatic Artists", in *Studies in Honor of T. W. Baldwin*, edited by Don Cameron Allen (Urbana, 1958), pp.136-149, p.147.

CHAPTER 7

"A LITTLE O'ERPARTED": CONVENTIONAL CHARACTERS AND *LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST*

In the last act of *Love's Labour's Lost* Shakespeare offers a simplistic reduction of the arts of dramatic characterization in the parodic show of the Nine Worthies. This "ostentation, or show, or pageant, or antic" (V.1.100) contains no story, but consists entirely of the presentation, identification, and reception of characters.[1] Its methods of so doing, under the direction of the village schoolmaster, may provide a useful analogue to Shakespeare's own use of characterization in the rest of the play.

The Nine Worthies were a well-known consortium of heroes admired in the Middle Ages. By tradition the group comprised three pagans (Hector of Troy, Alexander the Great, and Julius Caesar), three Old Testament figures (Joshua, David, and Judas Maccabaeus), and three Christian warriors (King Arthur, Charlemagne, and either Godfrey of Boulogne, Guy of Warwick, or another local hero).[2] The Nine Worthies were popular subjects for pageants, sculptures, and tapestries.[3] Therefore the heroes that Shakespeare's villagers intend to present have traditional, received characterizations which the players aim to continue and the spectators expect to see. There is no discussion of "contemporary relevance" or "original interpretation" of the roles; the point is to remain faithful to the traditional characters, and the joke is the villagers' inevitable deviations from those norms.

The first concern of the players is casting. "Where will you find men worthy enough to present them?" asks the Curate (V.1.113). Holofernes prefers to cast by physical type: Costard, "because of his great limb or joint, shall pass Pompey the Great"

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1. All line numbers refer to G. R. Hibbard's edition of *Love's Labour's Lost* for The Oxford Shakespeare (Oxford and New York, 1990).

2. Shakespeare's inclusion of Pompey and Hercules are therefore unconventional, although *Love's Labour's Lost* does not stress the lack of orthodoxy. Presumably Shakespeare substituted the two heroes for their comic potential. See Judith C. Perryman, "A Tradition Transformed in *Love's Labour's Lost*", *Études Anglaises* 37 (1984) 156-162.

3. Robert Withington records the depiction of the Nine Worthies at the royal welcomes for Queen Margaret at Coventry in 1456, Prince Arthur at Coventry in 1498, and Philip of Spain at London in 1554. Withington, *English Pageantry: An Historical Outline* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1918; reprinted New York, 1963), Vol. I, pp.149-150, 164-165, 189-194. John Nevinson describes the inclusion of the Nine Worthies in pictures and verses in the commonplace books of 1608 and 1616 by Thomas Trevelyon of London, and compares them with John Brock's Show of the Nine Worthies in Chester. Nevinson, "A Show of the Nine Worthies", *Shakespeare Quarterly* 14 (1963) 103-107.

(V.1.117).[4] The players also take into account the physical limitations of their company. Armado objects that Moth cannot play Hercules because he is the wrong physical type: "He is not quantity enough for that worthy's thumb; he is not so big as the end of his club" (V.1.120). Holofernes ingeniously arranges a compromise between actor and character: "He shall present Hercules in minority. His enter and exit shall be strangling a snake; and I will have an apology for that purpose" (V.1.122-124). The audience, too, expects the players to look the parts. Boyet objects that Nathaniel's nose "stands too right" (V.2.560) for Alexander the Conqueror, who was traditionally characterized by Plutarch and others as having a wry neck.[5] And when Don Armado makes his entrance the lords agree that "This cannot be Hector":

BOYET.
But is this Hector?
KING.
I think Hector was not so clean-timbered.
LONGUEVILLE.
His leg is too big for Hector's.
DUMAINE.
More calf, certain.
BOYET.
No; he is best indued in the small.
BEROWNE.
This cannot be Hector. (V.2.628-633)

Notably the spectators resist the casting which Holofernes has not determined by type.[6]

After the casting has been settled, the issues of presentation of character come to the fore. Costumes are not discussed in the plans for the pageant in V.1, but they are surely a major part of the performance in V.2; the programme announces that "if these four worthies in their first show thrive,/ These four will *change habits* and present the other five" (V.2.533-534, my italics). The traditional garb for the Nine Worthies was full armour. The individual worthies were identified chiefly by their heraldic devices.[7] Holofernes' pageant seems to aspire to these conventions: Hector appears "in arms" (V.2.624), and Pompey lays his arms at the Princess' feet (549). Nathaniel's "scutcheon

4. William Carroll considers this type-casting as evidence of an impulse towards physical realism. William C. Carroll, *The Great Feast of Language in Love's Labour's Lost* (Princeton, 1976), p.83.
5. John Kerrigan, editor, *Love's Labour's Lost*, The New Penguin Shakespeare (Harmondsworth, 1982), p.228, f.562.
6. Both Holofernes and Shakespeare seem to have been indecisive about the casting of Nathaniel and Armado; in V.1 they are assigned the roles of Joshua and Judas Maccabaeus, but in V.2 they portray Alexander and Hector while Holofernes takes on Judas Maccabaeus.
7. See Nevinson, pp.103-105.

plain declares that I am Alisander" (559); it bears the traditional emblem of Alexander, which Costard describes as "your lion, that holds his pole-axe sitting on a close-stool" (570).[8] Pompey too seems to bear his traditional device of a lion or leopard rampant; presumably Boyet's comment on Pompey's appearance "with leopard's head on knee" refers to Costard carrying his shield upside down so that the head of the emblem is at knee level (542).[9]

Apart from such conventional costuming, the characterization of the Worthies is primarily a matter of stating the hero's name and rehearsing his fame.

> I Pompey am, ...Pompey surnamed the Great,
> That oft in field, with targe and shield, did make my foe to sweat.
> (V.2.545-547)

> When in the world I lived, I was the world's commander;
> By east, west, north and south, I spread my conquering might.
> (V.2.557-558)

> Great Hercules is presented by this imp,
> Whose club killed Cerberus, that three-headed *canus* ...
> (V.2.581-582)

> The armipotent Mars, of lances the almighty,
> Gave Hector a gift, the heir of Ilion;
> A man so breathed that certain he would fight, yea,
> From morn to night, out of his pavilion.
> (V.2.641-644)

Judas is only allowed to get as far as "Judas I am, yclept Maccabaeus", but presumably his speech would have followed the same formula. The form seems to have been as conventional as the characters and their costumes. For example, Nevinson describes Thomas Trevelyon's presentation of the Nine Worthies: "Each worthy introduces himself by name, and at the end of his speech protests his devotion to the Sovereign, presumably Queen Elizabeth, and takes his leave."[10] In the *Love's Labour's Lost* pageant Pompey salutes the Princess in this same manner, and one might speculate that Alexander, Judas Maccabaeus, and Hector would have done so as well had they reached the ends of their speeches.

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8. Nevinson describes how Costard's joke about the lion's close-stool being given over to Ajax -- "a jakes", or a privy -- invaded subsequent representations of Alexander's emblem and demanded alteration from the traditional form. Nevinson, p.107.
9. Kerrigan, p.227, f.544.
10. Nevinson, p.105.

Aside from their physical appearance, then, the villagers establish their characters chiefly by verbal means. Only one of the Worthies is represented by his actions: Moth, presenting Hercules in minority, recreates the hero's juvenile feat of strangling serpents. The other players assume their roles simply by saying that they do so. This verbal transformation reiterates the Elizabethan pun that the characters are not "worthy" but "wordy".[11]

This style of characterization was not Shakespeare's invention; it is a fairly accurate description of the naïve dramatic traditions carried over from the medieval stage. We can see similar character constructions in the mystery plays, in which characters describe themselves and narrate their own actions as a matter of course. Compare Shakespeare's Worthies with King Balak from the Chester cycle:

> I Balaack, kinge of Moab land,
> all Israell and I had in hand.
> I am soe wrath I would not wond
> to slea them everye wight.[12]

Pilate announces himself in similar fashion in many plays, including this example from the York cycle:

> Loo, Pilate I am, proued a prince of grete pride.
> I was putte into Pounce the pepill to presse,
> And sithen Sesar hymselffe with exynatores be his side
> Remytte me to ther remys the renkes to redresse.
> And yitte am Y graunted on grounde as I gesse
> To justifie and juge all the Jewes.[13]

These advertisements of character also resemble the standard entrances of the mummers' plays:

> In comes I, King George,
> King George that valiant man with courage bold,
> 'Twas I that won five crowns of gold.[14]
>
> Here comes I the bold Turkish Knight,
> I came from the Turkish land to fight:
> First I fought in England,
> And then I fought in Spain,

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11. Carroll, p.29, f.22. Kerrigan, p.23.
12. "Play V, The Cappers Playe", in *The Chester Mystery Cycle*, edited by R. M. Lumiansky and David Mills, Early English Text Society S.S. 3 (London, 1974), Vol.I, p.83, lines 96-99.
13. "Play XXX: The Tapiters and Couchers", in *The York Plays*, edited by Richard Beadle (London, 1982), p.254, lines 19-24.
14. From the Netley Abbey mummers' play, quoted by Alan Brody in *The English Mummers and their Plays* (London, no date), p.49.

And now I am come back to England,
To fight Saint George again.[15]

The verbal announcement occurs in a more sophisticated play of the early sixteenth century, *Jacke Jugeler*:

I am called Jake Jugler of many an oon
And in fayth I woll playe a jugling cast anon;
I woll cungere the moull and God before
Or elles leat me lese my name for ever more![16]

Later still, in the popular romance *Clyomon and Clamydes* Alexander the Great enters and says,

After many inuincible victories, and conquests great atchiued
I *Alexander* with sound of Fame, in safetie am arriued
Vpon my borders long wished for, of *Macedonia* soile,
And all the world subiect haue, through force of warlike toile... [17]

Yet for the courtiers of *Love's Labour's Lost* this naive style of characterization clearly will not do. Berowne initially refuses to countenance the dramatic illusion and rejects the character device altogether:

COSTARD ***as Pompey.***
I Pompey am --
BEROWNE.
You lie! You are not he.
(V.2.541)

Similarly the lords resist the assertion that Holofernes represents Judas Maccabaeus and instead insist on regarding him as Judas Iscariot.

HOLOFERNES ***speaks as JUDAS.***
Judas I am --
DUMAINE.
A Judas!
HOLOFERNES.
Not Iscariot, sir. (***As JUDAS***) Judas I am, yclept Maccabaeus.
DUMAINE.
Judas Maccabaeus clipped is plain Judas.
BEROWNE.
A kissing traitor. How, art thou proved Judas?
HOLOFERNES ***as JUDAS.***
Judas I am --
DUMAINE.
The more shame for you, Judas.
(V.2.588-595)

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15. From the Camborne, Cornwall mummers' play, recorded by R. J. E. Tiddy, *The Mummers' Play* (Oxford, 1923), p.144. While there is no evidence that the mummers' plays of the sixteenth century employed these speech forms, their presence in the plays of the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries attests to the utility of the verbal self-characterization in a crude and naïve theatrical tradition.
16. *Jacke Jugeler*, in *Four Tudor Comedies*, edited by William Tydeman (Harmondsworth, 1984), pp.45-94, lines 106-109.
17. *Clyomon and Clamydes*, edited by W. W. Greg, for the Malone Society Reprints (Oxford, 1913), lines 360-363.

In contrast to the men, the Princess kindly humours the character illusion and encourages the players with their character names: "Speak, brave Hector; we are much delighted." (V.2.656)

As the scene develops, the lords reverse their attitudes to the actors and insist on addressing the villagers by their character names even after the role-playing has finished. Costard feels obliged to correct the illusion of his too-persuasive performance:

BEROWNE.
Pompey the Great --
COSTARD.
Your servant, and Costard.
(V.2.565-566)

The discrepancy between the heroic characters and their ridiculous impersonators grows increasingly hilarious for the lords. As Pompey "the Big" gives way to a tongue-tied Alexander and a baby Hercules, it becomes all too clear that the villagers are, as Costard says, "a little o'erparted". The lords take advantage of the discrepancies between actor and role to attack the pretensions of Holofernes and Armado, making it clear that in the audience's opinion the players are un-worthy. The hilarity reaches its peak as the lords egg on the riotous mock-heroic combat between Costard and Armado over Jaquenetta's pregnancy. Joseph Westlund suggests that "at the instigation of the lords, Armado and Costard begin to think of themselves as real heroes."[18]

ARMADO.
Dost thou infamonize me among potentates? Thou shalt die!
COSTARD.
Then shall Hector be whipped for Jaquenetta that is quick by him, and hanged for Pompey that is dead by him.
DUMAINE.
Most rare Pompey!
BOYET.
Renowned Pompey!
BEROWNE.
Greater than 'Great'! Great, great, great Pompey! Pompey the Huge!
DUMAINE.
Hector trembles.
BEROWNE.
Pompey is moved. More Ates, more Ates! Stir them on, stir them on!
DUMAINE.
Hector will challenge him.
BEROWNE.
Ay, if 'a have no more man's blood in his belly than will sup a flea.
ARMADO.
By the north pole, I do challenge thee.

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18. Joseph Westlund, "Fancy and Achievement in *Love's Labour's Lost*", *Shakespeare Quarterly* 18 (1967) 37-46, 41.

COSTARD.
I will not fight with a pole like a northern man. I'll slash; I'll do it by the sword. I bepray you, let me borrow my arms again.
DUMAINE.
Room for the incensed Worthies.
COSTARD.
I'll do it in my shirt.
DUMAINE.
Most resolute Pompey! (V.2.668-689)

The anti-climactic comic end to the quarrel, that Don Armado will not fight because he has no shirt to fight in, is made doubly ridiculous because of his identification with the valiant Hector. The traditional characters of the Worthies cannot withstand so much abuse, and their essential heroism lapses into burlesque, despite Armado's eloquent defense of his Worthy: "The sweet war-man is dead and rotten. Sweet chucks, beat not the bones of the buried. When he breathed, he was a man." (651-652)

In summary, the characterization of the show of the Nine Worthies follows a standard pattern. The characters are traditional figures, familiar to players and audience alike. The players do their best to sustain the conventional characterizations of their roles with costumes, emblems, and properties. The roles are most successfully cast with respect to physical type. The characterizations are, however, primarily verbal. The characters assert their own meanings without proving them in action. The characterizations fail to convince the audience, who either reject the asserted character meanings or take them much too literally, reducing the characters to burlesque figures rather than the traditional heroes intended by the players.

In many ways Shakespeare manipulates characterization and character meanings in a similar fashion in the main plot of *Love's Labour's Lost*. His four lords and four ladies are stylized, conventional figures. They represent familiar types within a predictable dramatic pattern. Their part of the play resembles a balanced Lylian love-game comedy like *Gallathea* or *Love's Metamorphosis*. The pageant of the eight lovers follows the conventional forms of its genre just as the Pageant of the Nine Worthies does. Visual emblems of characterization are important to the pattern, since masks and tokens identify the characters at times. Characters are expressed primarily through words, not actions, and their language is often stylized. Sonnets, rhyming couplets and quatrains, and blank verse are all employed by the lords and ladies; their language employs a multitude of proverbs and embraces the traditional love metaphors of worship, hunting, battle,

enlightenment, and of course horns;[19] and it thrives on "set[s] of wit" and word-play. The action of this lovers' pageant consists largely of presenting each character in turn in the same predicament, a repetitive movement much like the villagers' pageant, which presents the heroes one by one to declare their "worth" and salute the royal audience. As with the rustics, so with the courtiers: Shakespeare allows his audience to see that some of these individual characters are miscast for their roles in a formal love plot. One of the four lords, Berowne, resists the inital oath-taking and then complains when the plot demands that he become a lover. And the ladies, following the lead of their Princess, refuse to sit still and be wooed conventionally; they reject their suitors' poetry, gifts, and flattery as frivolous and deny that such pleasantries demonstrate love. The four lords prove themselves inadequate for their chosen roles as determined lovers, "soldiers" of Saint Cupid; like the Worthies, the lords' love-heroics are plunged into burlesque in the Muscovite masque. Hilarity ensues as the audience of ladies sees all too clearly the lords' deficiencies as lovers. Most seriously, the ladies refuse to take on the roles of lovers or wives without further proof of their suitors' seriousness. In doing so they thwart the comic pattern of convention, the resolution which the stylized plot had seemed intended to achieve:

> Our wooing doth not end like an old play;
> Jack hath not Jill. These ladies' courtesy
> Might well have made our sport a comedy.
> (V.2.856-858)

Holofernes might have made a similar complaint; the lords' courtesy might well have made his sport a successful heroic pageant. But the failures of the pageant and the love-plot cannot be blamed entirely on their critical audiences; part of the problem rests in the discrepancy between character and role, that is, on the potential tension between character as a psychological representation of an individual and character as a figure carrying out action in a formal plot.

In *Love's Labour's Lost* Shakespeare is consciously toying with the responsibilities of characterization in comedy. He sets up conventional comic expectations and rhythms which provide for many delightful scenes, yet ultimately he undermines them with

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19. G. R. Hibbard points out that *Love's Labour's Lost* contains more proverbs (189) than any other Shakespearean comedy, and more than any of the other plays except *King Lear* and *Romeo and Juliet*. *Love's Labour's Lost*, The Oxford Shakespeare (Oxford and New York, 1990), p.37.

characters and situations that overstep their comic limitations. By extending his formal characters with independent personalities and agendas Shakespeare challenges the comic premises of his play. As Leggatt says, "Throughout the play a favourite device is to set up a pattern and break it, only to create a larger pattern."[20] In this chapter we shall look first for the conventional pattern of comic characters in the groupings, narrative patterns, and traditional characterizations involved in both the main plot and sub-plot, and then we shall consider how Shakespeare's development of the individual characterizations interrupts these basic functions and challenges the traditional comic premise.

Shakespeare sets up comic expectations with the first scene as he introduces his first group of characters, the young lords of Navarre, the "fellow-scholars", the "brave conquerors". The King opens the play and establishes his identity and authority in his noble, over-ambitious declaration of ascetic commitment.

> Navarre shall be the wonder of the world;
> Our court shall be a little academe,
> Still and contemplative in living art.
> (I.1.12-14)

The King identifies his three companions by name and function.

> You three, Berowne, Dumaine, and Longueville,
> Have sworn for three years term to live with me,
> My fellow scholars, and to keep those statutes
> That are recorded in this schedule here.
> (I.1.15-18)

The lords, it seems, come as a set; they all have contemporary French names with associations of military valour and derring-do;[21] and they have sworn to a common endeavour of serious study.[22] However, as the scene develops, we learn that the unanimity of the group is imperfect: Berowne objects to the harsh conditions and unnatural asceticism of their vow. Nonetheless, when the odd man out is given the chance to depart, he chooses to remain in his group.

> **KING.**
> Well, sit you out. Go home, Berowne. Adieu!

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20. Alexander Leggatt, *Shakespeare's Comedy of Love* (London and New York, 1974, reprinted 1987), p.85.
21. See the discussion of the French references below.
22. H. B. Charlton writes, "The four courtiers could not but resemble each other in a wooden conformity; for they have all to do the same sort of thing, and have all to be guilty of an act of almost incredible stupidity." *Shakespearian Comedy* (London, 1938, reprinted 1955), p.272.

BEROWNE.
No, my good lord, I have sworn to stay with you.
(I.1.110-111)

Berowne signs his name to the common oath, and the first group of the play, the lords' quartet, is confirmed with a flourish. The group character, though, is already shown to contain dissent and paradox within its united front. The King departs with his close followers, Longueville and Dumaine, reaffirming their group purpose and leaving their reluctant fourth to complete their ambitious quatrain with scepticism:

KING.
And go we, lords, to put in practice that
Which each to other hath so strongly sworn.
BEROWNE.
I'll lay my head to any goodman's hat
These oaths and laws will prove an idle scorn.
(I.1.293-296)

The quartet of lords set up in I.1 is matched by a quartet of ladies in II.1. (See Figure 10.) They are accompanied by three lords, one of whom opens the scene by identifying the Princess and her endeavour:

Consider who the King your father sends,
To whom he sends, and what's his embassy:
Yourself, held precious in the world's esteem,
To parley with the sole inheritor
Of all perfections that a man may owe,
Matchless Navarre; the plea of no less weight
Than Aquitaine, a dowry for a queen.
(II.1.2-8)

The Princess reciprocates by identifying Lord Boyet as a flatterer and his function as "our best fair-moving solicitor" to serve as a go-between for the women's embassy to the cloistered lords of Navarre. The three ladies accompanying the Princess, though, are scarcely identified at all. They are not addressed by name, and the speech headings of the 1598 Quarto list them simply as 1. Lady, 2. Lad., and 3. Lad.[23] Their first speeches are devoted to similar descriptions of their opposite numbers, Longueville, Dumaine, and Berowne, whom they characterize with "bedecking ornaments of praise", dwelling chiefly on the men's quick wits. All we learn about the ladies themselves is that they are all well-born and move in fashionable circles. These similar speeches present the ladies as

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23. The Quarto of 1598 (hereafter Q) is the earliest edition of *Love's Labour's Lost* now extant, though many scholars believe that its title-page statement, "Newly corrected and augmented", points to an earlier edition. The next edition of the play was that of the first Folio of 1623 (hereafter F). See Hibbard's summary of the arguments about the authority of Q, pp.57-81.

	I.1	I.2	II.1	III.1	IV.1	IV.2	IV.3	V.1	V.2	no. scenes
KING	X		X				X		X	4
BEROWNE	X		X	X			X		X	5
LONGUEVILLE	X		X				X		X	4
DUMAINE	X		X				X		X	4
COSTARD	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	8
DULL	X	X				X		X		4
ARMADO		X		X				X	X	4
MOTH		X		X				X	X	4
JAQUENETTA		X				X	X			3
PRINCESS			X		X				X	3
ROSALINE			X		X				X	3
MARIA			X		X				X	3
KATHARINE			X		X				X	3
BOYET			X		X				X	3
HOLOFERNES						X		X	X	3
NATHANIEL						X		X	X	3
1 LORD			X		X					2
2 LORD			X		X					2
FORESTER					X					1
MARCADE									X	1

Figure 10
Love's Labour's Lost
Scene-Character Grid

equivalent figures in their group character.[24] Yet with these rather generic speeches Shakespeare sets up the romantic expectations associated with courtly comedy. Not only do the numbers of lords and ladies correspond perfectly, but three couples have already met and romantic speculation is in the air. "Are they all in love?" guesses the Princess. It seems inevitable that the plot will develop towards the love pairings of the four lords and the four ladies.

As II.1 progresses the men arrive to greet their diplomatic visitors, and the ensuing movement from politics into the sphere of flirtation and compliments adds the configuration of four couples to the already established pattern of two quartets. The second part of II.1 is devoted to the pairings as one by one Dumaine, Longueville, and Berowne enter surreptitiously and question Boyet about a particular lady. Although the King does not repeat this action a fourth time, Boyet fits him into the pattern of couples by announcing that "Navarre is infected" with love for the Princess.

The quartet structure returns in IV.3, the famous eavesdropping scene. Berowne enters alone with one of his sonnets and confesses his love to the audience. When the King appears with a love-sonnet of his own, Berowne hides and overhears it. The King likewise hides and overhears Longueville, who in turn hides to overhear Dumaine. The process then reverses as Longueville emerges to accuse Dumaine of breaking his oath, the King emerges to accuse Longueville, and Berowne finally steps out "to whip hypocrisy". Of course he is exposed as a hypocrite himself when Costard and Jaquenetta appear with Berowne's misdirected letter to Rosaline. The joke is that each man thinks his plight is individual, but the repeated action -- the private admission and public exposure -- confirms the solidarity of the group character.[25] The lords are indeed "four woodcocks in a dish"; in the communal predicament of forsworn love their repeated behaviour is made to seem inevitable.

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24. Charlton complains, "These ladies are as empty and as uniform as are their wooers." Charlton, p.272. Harley Granville-Barker reminds us that the ladies' roles were written for the limitations of boy players; therefore, he writes, "the ladies are not, and cannot be made, much more than mouthpieces for wit and good sense." *"Love's Labour's Lost", Prefaces to Shakespeare*, First Series (London, 1927), pp.1-49, p.31. The editor of the Arden edition, Richard David, takes a more complimentary view of these characterizations of the secondary lovers: "Shakespeare has established a definite personality and even physical character for each: the over-tall and slightly quizzical Longaville, Dumain, impetuous but not quite sure of himself, the red and gold charm of Katharine, and the brusquer Maria." *Love's Labour's Lost*, The Arden Shakespeare, fifth edition (London, 1956, reprinted 1977), p.xv.

25. C. L. Barber, *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy* (Princeton, 1959, reprinted 1972), p.90.

DUMAINE.
O that I had my wish!
LONGUEVILLE.
And I had mine!
KING.
And I had mine too, good Lord!
BEROWNE.
Amen, so I had mine! Is that not a good word?
(IV.3.90-92)

Love is the common denominator which obliterates individual character: all four lovers are hyperbolic and melancholic. Misery loves company, and the four lovers are delighted to find the security of their quartet intact. "Sweet lords, sweet lovers, O, let us embrace!" cries Berowne, with obvious relief now that his wish that "the other three were in" has come to pass. The King confirms this male brotherhood in a military motif:

KING.
Saint Cupid, then! And, soldiers, to the field!
BEROWNE.
Advance your standards, and upon them, lords!
Pell-mell, down with them! But be first advised
In conflict that you get the sun of them.
(IV.3.341-344)

The lords agree to pursue their love as a group, which Peter Erickson calls "the united masculine front".[26]

LONGUEVILLE.
Shall we resolve to ~~win~~ woo these girls of France?
KING.
And win them too! (IV.3.346-347)

The men are a united "we", the women are a formidable "they". The notion of wooing *en masse* is patently ridiculous, but Shakespeare has enforced the notion of a group character with uniform motivations to such an extent that it is impossible to imagine the lords undertaking individual decisions and actions at this point. Berowne's individual perspective on the lovers' plan wryly ends the scene on a sceptical note, but even his misgivings are framed in terms of the group:

Allons, allons! Sowed cockles reaped no corn,
And justice always whirls in equal measure:
Light wenches may prove plagues to men forsworn;
If so, our copper buys no better treasure.
(IV.3.358-361)

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26. Peter B. Erickson, "The failure of relationship between men and women in *Love's Labor's Lost*", *Women's Studies* 9 (1981) 65-81, 76.

The long final scene, V.2, reflects the three groups -- lords, ladies, and eccentrics -- in an intricate pattern. The opening interaction between the Princess and her three ladies reiterates the solidarity of the female group in the plot. Each one has received a lengthy love letter and a present from her admirer, and each finds this tribute laughable. "We are wise girls to mock our lovers so," says the Princess, and the three other ladies take her view, expressing very similar opinions about such folly in men who should be wise.[27] Their common attitude is translated into group action when Boyet brings a warning of the lords' concerted attack:

> Prepare, madam, prepare!
> Arm, wenches, arm! Encounters mounted are
> Against your peace. Love doth approach disguised,
> Armed in arguments. You'll be surprised.
> Muster your wits, stand in your own defence,
> Or hide your heads like cowards and fly hence.
> (V.2.81-86)

The Princess marshals her forces -- "Saint Denis to Saint Cupid" -- and orders them into consolidated opposition to the men's gambit. She instructs her ladies to meet the disguised lords in disguises of their own; each lady shall be masked, and each shall wear the identifying love token of another lady. Also, the ladies determine to snub the lords by refusing to dance or to hear their rehearsed tribute. Rosaline, Katherine, and Maria all comply with this group strategy without dissent. Their unity of purpose and action is choreographed physically into the Masque that ensues. *En masse* the ladies turn their backs on Moth's introductory speech; and in response to the King's desire to dance, the ladies again move as one.

> **ROSALINE.**
> Since you are strangers, and come here by chance,
> We'll not be nice. Take hands. We will not dance.
> **KING.**
> Why take we hands then?
> **ROSALINE.**
> Only to part friends.
> Curtsy, sweethearts -- and so the measure ends.
> (V.2.218-221)

Following this failed dance, the lords and ladies split up into "private" twosomes, but the action remains uniform: each woman punctures her companion's sweet words with her

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27. Agnew describes this passage as "choric". Gates K. Agnew, "Berowne and the Progress of *Love's Labour's Lost*", *Shakespeare Studies* 4 (1968) 40-72, 57.

quick wits and literal interpretation of language.[28] Boyet provides a communal characterization for this action:

> The tongues of mocking wenches are as keen
> As is the razor's edge invisible,
> Cutting a smaller hair than may be seen;
> Above the sense of sense, so sensible
> Seemeth their conference; their conceits have wings
> Fleeter than arrows, bullets, wind, thought, swifter things.
> (V.2.256-261)

The ladies break off the conversations as a group, and the male flank departs, "all dry-beaten with pure scoff".

The ladies quickly compare notes. Of course each encounter has proved identical to the others, and Shakespeare underlines his perfect pattern with evenly distributed rhyming lines:

> **ROSALINE.**
> But will you hear? The King is my love sworn.
> **PRINCESS.**
> And quick Berowne hath plighted faith to me.
> **KATHERINE.**
> And Longueville was for my service born.
> **MARIA.**
> Dumaine is mine as sure as bark on tree.
> (V.2.282-285)

On the return of the men, now divested of their Russian attire, the dialogue is limited to the Princess and the King, Rosaline and Berowne, but the situation clearly extends mutually over all four couples. The men discover first that they were recognized in their Muscovite disguise, and second that they failed to penetrate the ladies' disguise of switched identities.

> The ladies did change favours; and then we,
> Following the signs, wooed but the sign of she.
> Now, to our perjury to add more terror,
> We are again forsworn, in will and error.
> (V.2.468-471)

Berowne is glad to be interrupted by the Nine Worthies, who provide a gross parody of the gracefully patterned actions of the lords and ladies. Each actor steps forward in turn and presents a character of worth and heroism, but any chance of elegance is spoilt by the

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28. Leggatt remarks, "One feels that in this scene the speakers could be interchanged in a variety of ways, and it would make no difference: the lines they speak, like the masks they wear, could belong to anyone." Leggatt, p.73.

lords' ruthless heckling, which takes the excitable, "o'erparted" actors right out of their parts.

The interruption of Marcade and the news of the French king's death returns the focus to the lords and ladies. The changes of death, grief, and mourning might seem to pertain to the Princess alone, but Shakespeare's character structure requires that any resolution deal with the groups as the units of action. If the Princess returns to France, then all the ladies must return to France. If the Princess refuses to marry, then all the ladies will do so. Communality is built into the dramatic premise, so most of the last-minute wooing takes place in plural forms: "your fair sakes", "our humours", "your heavenly eyes", "our oaths and gravities", "your loves", "our letters", "our looks", "Grant us your loves". Given this joint proposal, it is almost surprising that the Princess speaks of herself and the King as individuals, and directs the King's "austere insociable" and presumably solitary stay in "some forlorn and naked hermitage" and her own term shut up "in a mourning house,/ Raining the tears of lamentation" without mentioning the other lords and ladies.

Yet the group persists in perpetuating the pattern. "Come when the King doth to my lady come," says Katherine to Dumaine without any individualizing context at all. Neither she nor Maria give any reasons or instructions for their separation from Dumaine and Longueville, though Maria hints that she will be mourning alongside the Princess in her "black gown". Presumably the knowledge gained by the King in his solitary penance will automatically seep into the members of his group as well. Rosaline, though, treats Berowne as an individual case. Because of Berowne's particular character she assigns him a particular employment for his year of separation.

> Visit the speechless sick, and still converse
> With groaning wretches; and your task shall be
> With all the fierce endeavour of your wit
> To enforce the pained impotent to smile.
> (V.2.833-837)

Despite its individualization, Berowne's penance conforms to the group pattern, and it is as a group representative that he comments on the scene's last developments.

> Our wooing doth not end like an old play.
> Jack hath not Jill. These ladies' courtesy
> Might well have made our sport a comedy.
> (V.2.856-858)

The last line of the Folio text, absent from Q and assigned in F to Armado, reemphasizes the separateness of groups in the cryptic words "You that way. We this way." Whether this refers to the ladies returning to France while the lords stay in Navarre, or alternatively, to the real audience and actors leaving the theatre in different directions, in either case it reiterates the play's fixation with group action and group identity. Peter Phialas writes,

> It is as if Shakespeare had believed that the conversion of four men would somehow lend weight and even complexity to a simple plot: that multiplicity of reversal would make up for the lack of complexity in the story.[29]

C. L. Barber explains,

> ... the action consist[s] not so much in what individuals do as in what the group does, its patterned movement. ... The evolutions in *Love's Labour's Lost* express the Elizabethan feeling for the harmony of a group acting in ceremonious consort.[30]

Love's Labour's Lost's obsession with balanced groups of characters and symmetrical action calls on a tradition of comic construction which had rooted itself in sixteenth-century English theatre. Classical and neoclassical comedy often involved parallel characters and situations: Plautus explored the comic potential of twin characters and their ensuing mistaken identities in *Bacchides* and *Menaechmi*, which Shakespeare reworked in his *Comedy of Errors*; and Terence included parallel situations of fathers, sons, servants, and lovers for dramatic contrasts and comparisons in *Adelphoe, Eunuchus, Heauton Timorumenos,* and *Phormio.* Ariosto and his Italian contemporaries of the *commedia erudita* employed similar double-plot construction in their neoclassical comedies like *La Cassaria* and *I Studenti.* Yet though these comedies included patterned behaviour they did not focus on groups; characters remained individual figures and types.

Groups of characters were more typical in the morality tradition, in which characters were collected into polarized moral positions representing virtues or vices. From the abstract groups of New Guise, Nought and Now-a-days in *Mankind*, or Honest Recreation, Comfort, Quickness and Strength in *Wit and Science*, the dramatic use of moral associations persisted into groups of more human characters, like Cuthbert Cutpurse and Pierce Pickpurse in *Like Will to Like*, or Orgalus and Oenophilus in *Misogonus*. The

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29. Peter G. Phialas, *Shakespeare's Romantic Comedies* (Chapel Hill, 1966), p.81.
30. Barber, p.89.

school moralities in the style of the "Christian Terence" generated groups of schoolboy protagonists, used either for dramatic contrasts of their differing choices and fates, as in *Asotus* and *Studentes*, or for the emphasis of reduplicative behaviour, as in *Rebelles*. *Love's Labour's Lost* resembles the latter structure of repeated characters and group actions. T. W. Baldwin calls Shakespeare's play "a regular school morality play in reverse", opposing study and books with ladies and love, but atypically favouring the latter.[31] J. J. Anderson continues the comparison:

> The King, Berowne, Longaville, and Dumain have similar characteristics and they are defined as a group with a particular function in the development of the morality; the same may be said for the four ladies and the 'common' characters.[32]

But of course Shakespeare's use of character groups derives most immediately from the dramatic structures of his own contemporaries, primarily from those of Lyly. Lyly, along with Greene, Nashe, and Peele, used groups of characters for secondary action in most of his plays.[33] These groups seem to have been generated by practical theatrical interests: the evenly distributed lines catered to the limited resources and the musical effects of the young boy players, and the multiplication of figures on the stage allowed for pretty, balanced stage pictures. Lyly's use of character groups in his main plots worked out the theatrical appeal of repeated actions and situations, and it is this effect that Shakespeare draws on most heavily in *Love's Labour's Lost*.[34] Lyly uses it first in the reflexive situation of *Gallathea*, in which the two disguised heroines, Gallathea and Phyllida, fall in love, each thinking that the other is a boy. Their timid feelings of desire and frustration are expressed in delicate speeches which mirror each other. Lyly continues the reduplicative plotting as each of Diana's three nymphs lapses from her vow of chastity and falls in love with the two girl/boys. The scene in which the nymphs reveal their

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31. T. W. Baldwin, *Shakspere's Five-Act Structure* (Urbana, 1963), p.588. Trevor Lennam follows up Baldwin's suggestion with a specific comparison of *Love's Labour's Lost* with the "Wit" moralities, Redford's *Wit and Science*, the anonymous *Marriage of Wit and Science*, and Merbury's *Marriage of Wit and Wisdom*. Trevor Lennam, "'The ventricle of memory': Wit and Wisdom in *Love's Labour's Lost*", *Shakespeare Quarterly* 24 (1973) 54-60.

32. J. J. Anderson, "The Morality of *Love's Labour's Lost*", *Shakespeare Survey* 24 (1971) 55-62, 55. Following the associations with the morality plays, Glynne Wickham compares the four lords of *Love's Labour's Lost* to the eponymous *Four Foster Children of Desire* who assault the Castle in the hopes of attaining Perfect Beauty. Wickham, "*Love's Labor's Lost* and *The Four Foster Children of Desire*, 1581", *Shakespeare Quarterly* 36 (1985) 49-55.

33. Examples are Sapho's ladies-in-waiting in *Sapho and Phao*, Diana's nymphs in *Gallathea*, the jesting pages in *Endimion* and *Midas*, and the fiddlers in *Mother Bombie*.

34. Baldwin discusses Shakespeare's debt to Lyly on pages 620-621.

forbidden love one by one has often been cited as Shakespeare's model for the eavesdropping scene of *Love's Labour's Lost* (IV.3).[35]

However, it is Lyly's later comedies that seem most pertinent to the overall structure of *Love's Labour's Lost*. *Love's Metamorphosis* puts forward a very similar masterplan in which three fellow foresters woo three recalcitrant nymphs. The solidarity of the male and female teams in attitude and action is very like Shakespeare's battle of the sexes in *Love's Labour's Lost*; the two trios chime in their repeated sentiments in an even pattern to create the overall group sense. *Mother Bombie* is less interested in unified groups than in perfectly patterned actions. Its plot is full of repeated scenes and situations. The cumulative effect of II.2, for example, in which each of the four fathers enters and exits in turn, each searching for his mischievous, scheming servant, recreates the same sense of "four woodcocks in a dish" that Shakespeare plays on with his four forsworn lords. The continual repetition of action by different but equivalent characters is very much the same effect as what Hibbard calls the "parade-ground technique of action and dialogue" of Shakespeare's four lords and four ladies.[36] The essence of these comedies is their predictability: the comedy works like a machine, and the audience delights in knowing what the characters are bound by the mechanics of the action to do before the characters know themselves.[37] Of course the predictability of *Love's Labour's Lost* is radically upset in the last minutes of the play. Hibbard writes,

> ... the sense of security we are made to feel through so much of the play's course is a false one. Shakespeare has his surprises in store for us; and surprise can be devastating when it intrudes into what has, so far, seemed a wholly predictable world and action.[38]

It would be difficult to establish a definite order of composition for *Gallathea*, *Love's Metamorphosis*, *Mother Bombie*, and *Love's Labour's Lost*; Alfred Harbage has gone so far as to speculate that Shakespeare may have written *Love's Labour's Lost* for Lyly's own company, the Boys of St Paul's, as early as 1588, the year of *Gallathea*'s court

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35. See, for example, Peter Berek, "Artifice and Realism in Lyly, Nashe, and *Love's Labor's Lost*", *Studies in English Literature* 23 (1983) 207-221, 216; G. K. Hunter, "Lyly and Shakespeare", *John Lyly: The Humanist as Courtier* (London, 1962), pp.340-342; T. W. Baldwin, p.618.
36. Hibbard, p.18.
37. Barber, pp.89-90.
38. Hibbard, p.20.

performance.[39] Yet *Love's Labour's Lost* makes a radical departure from the conventional comic union of lovers which Lyly's plays endorse.[40] In all three of these later comedies, Lyly has separated his true lovers with seemingly insurmountable obstacles: Gallathea and Phyllida are the same sex; Maestius and Serena are brother and sister; Nisa, Celia, and Niobe are not only unyielding, but are changed into a rock, a flower, and a bird respectively. In each case Lyly resorts to extraordinary means -- divine intervention and magic -- in order to bring about the conventional love resolution. In *Love's Labour's Lost* the lovers have practically no obstacles to their union at all,[41] yet Shakespeare imposes a startlingly external intervention at the last minute to avoid the comic resolution.[42]

With *Love's Labour's Lost* Shakespeare reacts against the inevitable romantic resolution.[43] He states his break explicitly: "Our wooing doth not end like an old play:/ Jack hath not Jill."[44] The generic "Jack" and "Jill" point towards the conventionalism of the group lovers. The comedy has failed because "Anyman" is not matched with "Anywoman"; even the enamoured lords could not tell the ladies apart. The general characterizations of the male and female quartets, the artifice that the playwright has made such a lark of throughout the play, seems to be incompatible with Shakespeare's vision of happiness in love. T. W. Baldwin remarks, "John Lyly would have ended it all as a game. But to Shakespeare marriage is not a game, nor the end of a game."[45] Shakespeare's point in *Love's Labour's Lost* is reflected in the opinions of the ladies: these characters are not sufficiently developed to embark on the serious vows of marriage. His conception of the formulaic characters makes them fit for "sport" but not for "comedy". The comic formula

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39. Alfred Harbage, "*Love's Labor's Lost* and the Early Shakespeare", in *Shakespeare Without Words and Other Essays* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1972), pp.117-142. See also T. W. Baldwin, p.629. However there is greater consensus for a date of 1594-1595.

40. Three of Lyly's earlier plays had avoided the romantic resolution, but this was clearly intended to celebrate Queen Elizabeth's chastity as the best choice for a devoted, semi-divine monarch. Irene Dash hints that Shakespeare's independent-minded Princess may have conveyed a similar compliment to Elizabeth. Dash, *Wooing, Wedding, and Power: Women in Shakespeare's Plays* (New York, 1981), p.15.

41. Ruth Nevo comments, "Had *Love's Labour's Lost* ended with marriages not one accepted statement of the play's thematic import would have required alteration." *Comic Transformations in Shakespeare* (London and New York, 1980), p.87.

42. Phialas calls the imposition of the *deus ex machina* device in the form of Mercade a "structural deficiency". Phialas, p.85.

43. For a different view see Karl F. Thompson, "Shakespeare's Romantic Comedies", *PMLA* 67 (1952) 1079-1093.

44. These traditional expectations for the end of any comedy are voiced by Subtle Shift at the end of *Clyomon and Clamydes*: "Is the pageant packed up and all parties pleased?/ Hath each Lord his Lady, and each Lady her love?" Malone Society, lines 2130-2132.

45. Baldwin, p.615.

invoked in the romantic plot suffers from the same handicap as the heroic formula invoked in the pageant: both are miscast.

Even before the romantic resolution breaks down in Act V it emerges that these group characterizations are problematic in various ways. The lords' characterization is infiltrated by potentially troubling topical overtones. The ladies' characterizations develop out of the initial perfunctory objects of the men's affections into independent agents with tangible power. And commenting on his own conventional characterization and action throughout the play is the puzzling character of Berowne; in this fascinating character we can see most clearly the struggle between the group and the individual, between plot and personality in Shakespeare's developing characterization. From the first moments of the play these aspects of Shakespeare's characterization challenge a superficial acceptance of the comic conventions of character.

The four foolish young lords introduced in the first scene are not simply ciphers; their names, "Navarre", "Biron", "Longueville", and "Dumaine", all have ambiguous topical significance. Henri, the Protestant king of Navarre in Shakespeare's day, became the king of France after Henri III was assassinated in 1589. As Henri IV he was caught up in the French wars of religion. As a Protestant, Elizabeth supported Henri in the Protestant cause, and in 1591 the Earl of Essex led an English force to Dieppe, Gournay, and Rouen, where he fought alongside Charles, Duc de Biron, and posted his troops near the estate of the Duc de Longueville. The Duc de Mayenne led the Catholic League from 1588 until Henri IV abjured Protestantism in 1593, to the dismay of Elizabeth. In 1595 Henri returned to English favour through a strong alliance against Spain. These connections would give the French names a distinct resonance for English audiences in the 1590's.[46]

But what does Shakespeare mean for his audience to understand about his characters from these allusions to contemporary French history? Harbage believes that Shakespeare meant no specific allusion, but rather a vague sense of the French nobility.[47] Charlton

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46. For further historical reading, see Mark Greengrass, *France in the Age of Henri IV: The Struggle for Stability* (London, 1984); also the Duc de Lévis Mirepoix, *Henri IV: Roi de France et de Navarre* (Paris, 1971).

47. Harbage writes, "It is hard to believe that *Love's Labour's Lost* could have been written or even performed in England between August 1589 and July 1593, or that its character names would have been

assumes that Shakespeare specifically substituted the contemporary names for "an added topical interest" to otherwise ahistorical characters.[48] Hugh Richmond describes Shakespeare's account of Navarre as "imaginative journalism" and cites specific historical details within the text to suggest that Shakespeare intends a direct portrayal of Henri de Navarre, Charles de Biron, Léonor de Longueville, and d'Aumont.[49] Albert Tricomi believes that Shakespeare has "deliberately oversimplified and ritualized" the historical characters;[50] he suggests that Shakespeare has submerged the serious elements of the French allusions (the civil wars, Henri's apostasy, de Mayenne's opposition) into a dreamlike, Arcadian fantasy "which is more than a little humorous".[51] The comical disparity is not unlike that of the villagers playing the Worthies; in comparing foolish young lovers with the powerful soldiers of a terrible war, the parts of the French lords also amount to a burlesque of heroism.[52]

The historical event most relevant to *Love's Labour's Lost* is the visit of Marguerite de Valois to her estranged husband, Henri, in Nérac in 1578. Accompanied by an "escadron volant" of beautiful women, not to mention her formidable mother, Catherine de Medici, Marguerite distracted Henri and his courtiers from the questions of her marriage settlement, including the disposition of Aquitaine. Under the women's influence, the court of Navarre was taken up with glamorous pleaures and pastimes, until the death of Marguerite's younger brother caused her to break off the social life and retreat into mourning.[53] The characterizations in *Love's Labour's Lost* of the Princess and her ladies

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voluntarily chosen between 1593 and 1598. Toward the end of the latter period they could have been tolerated in a revival;" p.128.

48. H. B. Charlton, "The Date of *Love's Labour's Lost*", *Modern Language Review* 13 (1918) 257-266,387-400, 260.

49. "The vacillating character of Shakespeare's king is painfully relevant to the historical King of Navarre," he writes, and "the extravagant portrait of Berowne is largely taken from life." Richmond implies that Shakespeare's audience would have understood the "historical" characters as representatives of contemporary French politics, with its "twin appeals of scandal and mythmaking." Richmond, "Shakespeare's Navarre", *Huntington Library Quarterly* 42 (1979) 193-216, 199, 204, 214.

50. Albert H. Tricomi, "The Witty Idealization of the French Court in *Love's Labor's Lost*", *Shakespeare Studies* 12 (1979) 25-33, 27.

51. Tricomi, p.29.

52. Perhaps there is a modern equivalent for such a reduction of French men-at-arms; the popular television series "Allo Allo" reduces the French Resistance to a collection of bumbling fools with ridiculous accents.

53. For more historical information about Marguerite, see *The Memoirs of Marguerite de Valois, Queen of Navarre*, translated by Violet Fane (London, 1892), p.241; also Jean-H. Mariéjol, *La Vie de Marguerite de Valois* (Paris, 1928), Chapter 7: "La Cour de Nérac", pp.153-183.

may thus have carried historical overtones as well.[54] Richmond declares that, above and beyond the similarities of circumstances,

> Shakespeare catches perfectly the ruthlessly destructive attitude of this band of young women toward their male diplomatic opponents. Their startlingly manipulative view of sexual psychology is therefore not Shakespeare's invention but an approximately historical re-creation of Marguerite's impact on the puritan court at Nérac.[55]

Hibbard qualifies this "historical" view of the women's embassy: "the Princess of France is and is not Marguerite de Valois ... Shallow, frivolous, and morally lax, Marguerite was almost the obverse of Shakespeare's Princess."[56] Kerrigan also feels that

> the similarities are not great. Apart from anything else, Henry and Marguerite met as an estranged man and wife, not as a king and princess falling in love at first sight. In so far as *Love's Labour's Lost* can be related to contemporary events -- which is scarcely at all -- it seems to be an oblique response to the unification of France and Navarre under Henry in 1589-94. ... *Love's Labour's Lost* offered its Elizabethan audience a reassuringly light-hearted view of an alliance across the Channel which probably seemed in reality rather disturbing. ... where the play uses history, it uses it as something to escape from.[57]

Historical meanings, fictional meanings, submerged meanings, contra-topical meanings -- the seemingly straightforward courtly lovers begin to take on layers of reference like those of Lyly's allegorical characters. Although the infamous "School of Night" theory associating the four academic lords with the unorthodox intellectual circle of Sir Walter Ralegh and his followers has been largely dismissed in recent criticism, the figures of contemporary French history are still alluring.[58] They suggest that beneath the superficial charm of the characters lie hints of the darker side of French politics in the seriousness of Navarre's broken oath, the alarming heresy and solipsism in the manipulation of religious arguments, and the threatening, titillating edge to the sexual

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54. Persistent searchers have found a "Catherine" and a "Marie" amongst Marguerite's ladies, as well as a young lady who seems to have pined away and died for love, like the fictional Katherine's sister. See Richmond, p.202.
55. Richmond, p.209.
56. Hibbard, pp.49-50.
57. Kerrigan, pp.10-11.
58. Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch and John Dover Wilson promoted the idea that there was an Elizabethan circle known as the School of Night in their New Shakespeare edition of the play (Cambridge, 1923), p.xxx. (J. D. Wilson later revised this opinion in his second edition, Cambridge, 1962.) The specific associations with Ralegh, Chapman, the Earl of Derby, the Earl of Northumberland, and others were presented most fully in Frances A. Yates' *A Study of Love's Labour's Lost* (Cambridge, 1936), and M. C. Bradbrook's *The School of Night* (Cambridge, 1936). The theory was challenged in E. A. Strathman's article, "The Textual Evidence for 'The School of Night'", *Modern Language Notes* 56 (1941) 176-86, and has been treated with scepticism ever since. It seems likely that connotations of the academic pursuits of the Ralegh group may have informed passing references in *Love's Labour's Lost* for a contemporary courtly audience without dominating the meaning of Shakespeare's characters.

politics.[59] Like the theme of mortality (which is also introduced in the first speech of the play), the disturbing connotations of the French references remain submerged for most of the play, subliminally informing the stylized charm of the characterization.[60]

The four ladies also demonstrate something of Shakespeare's challenge to conventional characterization. When they arrive in Act II they seem to be nameless ciphers, conjured up in the Lylian mode of witty court ladies to satisfy the artificial situations of the plot.[61] At this point they seem to be simply the agents necessary to create the play's action by interfering with the men's vows. The tangled pairings of Katherine and Rosaline with Dumaine and Berowne in II.1 appear to confirm the lack of definition in Shakespeare's initial conception.[62] The historical identification of their characters is not nearly as explicit as that of the four lords. The ladies' first remarks deal with the men: the Princess speaks of the King and his (narrative) position (II.1.20-34), and the three ladies set up the (narrative) expectations of a love plot with their speeches about the three lords (II.1.40-76). Although the ladies' characterizations are somewhat limited by their strict adherence to a group model, that group characterization develops away from conventional romantic expectations. As Smidt remarks, the ladies' characters move beyond the Petrarchan position.[63] Their interest in the play shifts away from what seems to be a narrative love agenda, flirtation leading towards marriage, to less containable objectives of power and dominance, "to make theirs ours, and ours none but our own."[64] The Princess declares, "praise may we afford/ To any lady that subdues a lord," and Rosaline wishes for absolute control, to "o'ersway his state/ That he should be my fool, and I his fate."

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59. Heretical solipsism features behind the rhetorical brilliance of Berowne's arguments throughout the play, as T. W. Baldwin explains, pp.582-586.

60. Bobbyann Roesen (Anne Barton) discusses the important presence of death in the play in "*Love's Labour's Lost*", *Shakespeare Quarterly* 4 (1953) 411-426, 420.

61. Smidt, p.214.

62. See John Kerrigan, "Shakespeare at Work: The Katharine-Rosaline Tangle in *Love's Labour's Lost*", *Review of English Studies* N.S. 33 (1982) 129-136, 134. Janet Spens assumes that the Katharine-Rosaline tangle occurs because "originally the Princess had only two ladies -- the fair Maria and a dark Katharine," and Rosaline was added later. "Notes on *Love's Labour's Lost*", *Review of English Studies* 7 (1931) 331-334, 332.

63. Smidt, p.217. See also Neal L. Goldstein, "*Love's Labour's Lost* and the Renaissance Vision of Love", *Renaissance Quarterly* 25 (1974) 335-350, 345. Also Dash, p.15.

64. Louis A. Montrose sees this sort of language as evidence of the play's subversion of a love ritual, which would lead to union, into a game of wit combat, which leads instead to the separation of winners and losers; the ladies, he believes, are decidedly interested in winning, and exercise a "charming power politics" to that end. Montrose, "'Sport by sport o'erthrown': *Love's Labour's Lost* and the Politics of Play", *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 18 (1977) 528-552, 545.

Shakespeare dramatizes his ladies with bows and arrows: they are not the passive, voiceless Petrarchan goddesses of the men's imagination; they wield tangible power.[65] Like Lyly's Sapho, they are a match for Cupid and Venus, although unlike Sapho they seem untroubled with the bittersweet pangs of affection for their undeserving admirers.[66] Even before the unexpected interruption of the French King's death, the characterizations of the ladies were veering out of romantic-comic stereotypes and expectations. They are not chaste like Lyly's ladies or Greene's virtuous heroines, but are notoriously bawdy and interested in sex. The Princess, at least, defends her "virgin palm" and "maiden honour", but Rosaline is described as "one that will do the deed/ Though Argus be her eunuch and her guard."[67] Their deferral of marriage comes not from a Lylian/Elizabethan defense of chastity or social status, but from an interest in power and in reforming more worthy lovers for themselves.[68] Is this still a dramatic response to the agency of the male characters, or has Shakespeare become interested in the ladies as independent characters with their own agendas?[69] The emphasis of the penances remains on the lords; the men retain the central roles in the story. But the four ladies have acquired a certain dramatic independence over the course of the play: Maria's, Katherine's, and Rosaline's praise of their male counterparts in II.1 has given way to more critical assessments.[70] Compare Rosaline's earlier description with her later words:

> His eye begets occasion for his wit,
> For every object that the one doth catch
> The other turns to a mirth-moving jest,
> Which his fair tongue, conceit's expositor,
> Delivers in such apt and gracious words
> That aged ears play truant at his tales,
> And younger hearings are quite ravished,
> So sweet and voluble is his discourse.
> (II.1.69-76)

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65. Erickson, p.75. Montrose points out that the ladies' political mission surfaces at points in the beginning, middle and end of the play; the ladies, he writes, "bring the harsher realities of social and political existence" into the men's world of game and recreation; pp.544-545.
66. For an extended comparison of *Love's Labour's Lost* and *Sapho and Phao* see David Bevington, "'Jack Hath Not Jill': Failed Courtship in Lyly and Shakespeare", *Shakespeare Survey* 42 (1989) 1-13.
67. See Goldstein, p.346.
68. See Hunter's comparison of Lyly's chaste monarchs and *Love's Labour's Lost*, p.348.
69. Peter Erickson thinks that the play sides with the women, giving them the advantage in both plot and wit; see p.70.
70. Anderson believes that "Rosaline's attitude to Berowne has hardened in the course of the play as she has become more aware of the hurtful potential of his laughter"; p.61. He does not mention the hurtful potential of her own laughter.

... the world's large tongue
Proclaims you for a man replete with mocks,
Full of comparisons and wounding flouts,
Which you on all estates will execute
That lie within the mercy of your wit.
(V.2.824-828)

Clearly, the feminine characterization shifts over the course of the play. From the ladies' obvious suitability as lovers for the lords, Shakespeare develops their characterization away from this perfunctory narrative end into less containable characteristics of independence, critical consciousness, sensuality, maturity, and a definite taste for power. These are the disquieting qualities which, with the intrusion of death and the outside world, put off the ending of the comedy for at least a year and a day.

The character of Berowne shows with particular clarity the tension between character function and individualization in this play. He criticizes the academe, yet he signs his name to its commitments. He is exuberant in his declaration of love, yet despises his submission to love. He scourges his male group and is yet the leader of that group; he is its critic and its spokesman; he is at once an inextricable part of the pattern and an individual voice.[71] Shakespeare achieves this ambiguous effect through extended verbal characterization. In action Berowne is no different from his fellows: he is bound to the story and vows, flirts, writes sonnets, masks, and proposes whenever the group does. (See Figure 11.) Yet Shakespeare endows Berowne with an individuality of thought and expression. His companions comment on Berowne's verbal virtuosity; they seem to know that it is often hollow solipsism. In I.1, after Berowne's intricate construction on the theme of light ("Light seeking light doth light of light beguile" and so forth), the King remarks dryly, "How well he's read, to reason against reading". Yet it is this same rhetorical sophistry that the lords call on to salvage their guilty consciences in IV.3:

KING.
... good Berowne, now prove
Our loving lawful and our faith not torn.
DUMAINE.
Ay marry, there; some flattery for this evil.
LONGUEVILLE.
O, some authority how to proceed --
Some tricks, some quillets, how to cheat the devil.
(IV.3.281-285)

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71. Kristian Smidt complains, "The very character of Berowne is made inconsistent." "Shakespeare in Two Minds: Uncomformities in *Love's Labour's Lost*", *English Studies* 65 (1984) 205-219, p.209.

CHARACTER	BOUND	FREE	STATIC	DYNAMIC
KING	B			D
BEROWNE	B			D
LONGUEVILLE	B			D
DUMAINE	B			D
COSTARD	(B)		S	
DULL		F	S	
ARMADO	(B)		S	
MOTH		F	S	
JAQUENETTA	(B)		S	
PRINCESS	B		S	
ROSALINE	B		S	
MARIA	B		S	
KATHARINE	B		S	
BOYET	B		S	
HOLOFERNES		F	S	
NATHANIEL		F	S	
1 LORD		F	S	
2 LORD		F	S	
FORESTER		F	S	
MARCADE	B		S	

Figure 11
Love's Labour's Lost
Characters in Relation to Narrative

This dubious introduction inspires Berowne's most spectacular speech of the play, the "Promethean fire" anthem to women and love.

But Berowne's verbal characterization consists of more than mere rhetorical flourish; Shakespeare also dramatizes a very singular perspective on the action. This is marked particularly by Berowne's two soliloquies, at the end of III.1 and the beginning of IV.3. Soliloquies in general give a character a special, privileged intimacy with an audience. Elsewhere in *Love's Labour's Lost* soliloquies are written for the clowns for humourous effect, but whereas we laugh at Don Armado and Costard in their private moments, we laugh with Berowne in sharing his wry assessment of his own predicament.

Berowne's III.1 soliloquy is something of a set piece. In verse it cynically harangues Cupid's power, Rosaline's charms, and Berowne's own romantic obligations. In tone the speech resembles Shakespeare's mocking sonnets ("My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun", and so on), and its humour relies on the discrepancy between such cynical realism and the more traditional romantic expectations of the courtly lover. Shakespeare sets up these expectations immediately before the speech as Berowne sends a love letter to the "white hand" of "a gentle lady". Berowne cannot believe that he is acting in such an uncharacteristic way: "And I, forsooth, in love! I that have been love's whip ... What? I love, I sue, I seek a wife?" Shakespeare tries here to establish some depth by showing a character in the process of change, from an old self to a new. As we have seen, dynamism of character had become a primary feature of the structure of other comedies like *Misogonus* and *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*. Phialas considers Berowne to be the first successful Shakespearian example of this new, dynamic mode of comic characterization:

> *Love's Labour's Lost* introduces another structural principle, namely the change from one extreme attitude towards love to the other in the same character or characters, instead of presenting the extremes in different characters, as in *The Comedy of Errors* and *The Taming of the Shrew*. What Shakespeare is doing, then, is to replace the juxtaposition of such attitudes within the same individual. And this very clearly leads to a more careful conception of character.[72]

However, from what we have seen of Berowne in the play so far, his characterization has changed very little; his description in III.1 of his former "neglect/ Of [Cupid's] almighty dreadful little might" scarcely corresponds with his defence of women's enlightening

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72. Phialas, p.87.

powers in I.1.80-83.[73] Altogether the impression of the speech is a curiously passive, static account of the character: Berowne describes his love as "imposed" and the speech omits any active choices or plans on the part of the character. All its ramifications and obligations seem preordained in Berowne's rueful submission to his future: "Well, I will love, write, sigh, pray, sue, and groan./ Some men must love my lady, and some Joan" (III.1.197-198).[74]

The dynamism of the character is dramatized more effectively in the prose speech beginning IV.3, in which Berowne swings from disgust to love and back again in a remarkably free train of thought:

> By the Lord, this love is as mad as Ajax. It kills sheep, it kills me -- I a sheep. Well proved again o' my side! I will not love. If I do, hang me. I'faith, I will not. O, but her eye! By this light, but for her eye I would not love her. Yes, for her two eyes. Well, I do nothing in the world but lie, and lie in my throat. (IV.3.5-10)

The quicksilver changes of mood and thought are wonderfully actable; and the colloquial expressions, along with the casual prose style, contribute to an illusion of naturalness, a semblance of a "real" person glimpsed for a moment outside the constructions of comic artifice.[75] Berowne literally stands outside artifice in the ensuing scene as he comments on the conventional romantic attitudes taken on by his fellows. In his asides he retains his intimate connection with the audience, commenting on the courtly lovers' uses of rhyme (IV.3.56) and the traditional metaphors of idolatry (72-3) and fever (95-6). But of course, while criticizing the romantic conventions Berowne is still squarely within the conventions of comedy. Eavesdropping and asides were staple comic devices in antiquity, and Shakespeare elaborates the device to create an extremely artificial situation out of the initial "realistic" soliloquy. Just when Berowne seems to be outside and above the pattern of his

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73. Smidt, p.210.

74. Leggatt comments, "Berowne has the range of vision and feeling found so often in the major characters of the comedies; but this does not give him the self-control or the power of action ... The clarity with which he sees both sides of his dilemma leaves him, paralysed, in the middle." Leggatt, p.77.

75. The soliloquy of indecision is of course a dramatic convention in its own right; consider Eumenides' dilemma in *Endimion*, III.4, or the important change of heart by Prince Edward in scene viii of *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*. However, Shakespeare's use of it here is not a component of narrative but a representation of individual thought: Berowne generates no active choice for future action with his words; instead we are invited to peek into his fevered lover's brain. John Wilders attributes Shakespeare's use of the soliloquy to Lyly's influence: "The Unresolved Conflicts of *Love's Labour's Lost*", *Essays in Criticism* 27 (1977) 20-33, 27.

group, he proves to be solidly within it. Shakespeare even allows the character to recognize the fact, "That you three fools lacked me fool to make up the mess."[76]

Why, then, does Shakespeare bother individualizing Berowne at all? David P. Young believes that the individual perspective is simply an opportunity for the play to include an alternative point of view alongside the action,[77] but Berowne's attitude towards his action is ambivalent. He signs his name to the academic vow, but has misgivings that "These oaths and laws will prove an idle scorn" (I.1.296); he whips his fellows into a fever with plans for wooing and winning the ladies, yet suspects "Light wenches may prove plagues to men forsworn" (IV.3.360). Of course Berowne's misgivings prove correct, and both the academe and the wooing fail to live up to the men's high hopes. This perspicacity on Berowne's part has encouraged other critics to view the character not as an alternative consciousness, but a superior consciousness. It is no accident, they say, that Berowne's is the dominant awareness in the eavesdropping scene, "like a demigod", second only to the theatre audience.[78] The suggestion of the character's omniscience has attracted some comment: Roesen calls Berowne a "Chorus character";[79] and Palmer and Pater see the character as an image of Shakespeare himself.[80] Yet this "demigod" is not infallible; like his fellows he is taken in by the ladies' trick in Act V; he is forsworn again and again. Colie comments,

> Berowne is, then, both chorus and hero, an unexpected combination which accounts for considerable tension in his role, as his detachment is always challenged by his singular commitment. ... In other words, Shakespeare has double-cast Berowne, fused conventional dramatic roles in a single part; and by that very fusion, the playwright manages to examine and to criticize both roles.[81]

In this line of reasoning Berowne must be at once an agent and an observer. It is an uncomfortable marriage. Though Berowne predicted the men's poor success, he still objects to the failure of their story. The action, which he has earlier compared to a "Christmas comedy" and "an old infant play", is no longer "like an old play" or a "comedy"; the more realistic ending of time and experience imposed by the penances is

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76. See Leggatt, p.86.
77. David P. Young, *Something of Great Constancy* (New Haven and London, 1966), p.55.
78. See Bertrand Evans' discussion of Shakespeare's manipulation of levels of awareness in *Shakespeare's Comedies* (Oxford, 1960). Pages 19-24 treat *Love's Labour's Lost*.
79. Roesen, p.412.
80. John Palmer, *Comic Characters of Shakespeare* (London, 1953), p.25. Walter Pater, *Appreciations* (London, 1922), p.168.
81. Rosalie L. Colie, *Shakespeare's Living Art* (Princeton, 1974), p.37.

"too long for a play". The character seems to mistrust the action that belongs to comedy, but objects to action that undermines it.

The puzzling structural duality of the character, alongside his charismatic command of words, has led many scholars to regard the characterization of Berowne as a model for the overall comic form of *Love's Labour's Lost*. Wilders conceives of the character as

> holding within his mind most of the complex attitudes the play as a whole contains: ... Though to this extent his complex character contains most of the play's conflicting attitudes, Berowne is unable to reconcile them. Indeed it is a point of the play that such a reconciliation is not possible. Berowne is an uncomfortably divided man.[82]

It is true that the opposing functions of Berowne's character in the play, in complying with artificial patterns as well as criticizing them, are exemplary of *Love's Labour's Lost*'s unconventional tension between character and comedy. Yet Wilders betrays twentieth-century attitudes towards drama in attributing this tension to the character's complex psychology. The complexity we find in the character is basically structural. As in *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, the inclusion of a sympathetic, individualized treatment of a character's perspective on the action adds another enticing layer to the plot, but that does not mean that the psychological motivation will be sustained or consistent. Like Greene's use of Margaret of Fressingfield, Shakespeare uses Berowne's character to convey an individual consciousness as well as to comply with narrative convention; the difference is that Berowne seems to be aware of his conflicting structural responsibilities. The various aspects of Berowne's character are not necessarily unified into a single independent personality (although an actor may convince us of this); but the dramatist is moving towards a consistent interest in the individual point of view in his plotting. Such sympathetic, individualized characterizations would be joined more successfully with narrative obligations in later comedies like *Much Ado About Nothing* and *Twelfth Night*.

The structural tension between characterization and conventional action undermines Shakespeare's subplot as well. The secondary characters dominate about half of the scenes of *Love's Labour's Lost*, but they have little or no responsibility to the main line of action. Costard's misdelivery of the letters exposes Berowne as a lover, thus completing the

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82. Wilders, p.27. Agnew expresses a similar thought, p.41.

pattern of Act IV, but this incident does not greatly affect the narrative outcome. The other low characters are insignificant to the main story.

Instead Shakespeare locates the low characters in a story line of their own. Initially this seems to provide an independent narrative counterpoint to the lords' action, just as the subplots do in *Endimion, Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, and other multiple-plot plays of the period. Although the minor action of *Love's Labour's Lost* seems at first as if it will follow a conventional narrative pattern with traditional stock types, Shakespeare's fascination with characterization soon overtakes the narrative logic and alters the expected relationship between character and action.

The subplot is introduced in the first scene of the play and at once it appears to be a parody of the main plot. Shortly after the lords have established the ban on female company Constable Dull enters with Costard the swain in his custody. Costard's introduction is an immediate response to the lords' position, for he has been caught with Jaquenetta and says, "it is the manner of a man to speak to a woman" (I.1.207). The clown's flippant protests, the self-important pomp of the letter convicting him and the bumbling malapropisms of Constable Dull all confirm that the lords' proclamation is unnatural, unenforceable, and ridiculous. The King sentences Costard to a week of fasting in the care of his accuser, Don Armado, and Dull takes him away into the independent subplot. Already the play promises that the exploits of these foolish characters will prove their lords to be fools as well.

The first scene, then, punishes a rustic clown for love. The next scene, I.2, continues the love plot as it presents a new character who is also in love. As the scene progresses, we learn that this character is Costard's grandiloquent accuser, and that the woman he loves is none other than Costard's wench. This potentially interesting love triangle is actualized when Constable Dull brings both Costard and Jaquenetta into the scene. Dull delivers Costard into Don Armado's custody, and the Don seizes the opportunity to declare his love and arrange a tryst of his own with Jaquenetta. At this point the subplot seems to be developing along the standard narrative line of two suitors competing for a single girl; this conventional story will be rendered in a humorous vein since the two suitors are a rustic clown and a ridiculous braggart and the girl is a flirtatious

country wench. Supernumeraries in this story are the bumbling constable and the braggart's sharp-witted little page. All five of these characters were familiar types on the Elizabethan stage, and in their early scenes Shakespeare follows tradition in their portrayal.[83]

Jaquenetta, the key figure of the triangular arrangement, is one of the shallowest characters in the play. In the few lines assigned to her there is little evidence of any attempt at an independent personality. Her brief exchange with Don Armado is made up of flirtatious stock-phrases, and her lines in IV.2 and 3 are entirely devoted to the immediate puzzle of the letter.[84] For the purposes of the subplot Shakespeare seems to have imagined simply an attractive, "light" rustic maid (and this meaning was doubtless created as much visually and physically by the player as by the text). In summoning up a standard character type Shakespeare uses a sort of theatrical shorthand: he establishes the traditional characterization early on and then lets the visual presence of the character inform her subsequent action without much direction from the script.

The characterization of Jaquenetta's two suitors also draws on established theatrical conventions. The opposition of a "high", verbally-oriented clown with a "low", duncelike clown was a standard feature of both Italian *commedia* and English comedy. *Love's Labour's Lost* contrasts Costard's simple literalism with Don Armado's prolix pretentiousness for comic effect. For instance, the phrases of the Spaniard's letter are mingled with Costard's puzzled reductions in I.1:

KING (reading Don Armado's letter).
'There did I see that low-spirited swain, that base minnow of thy mirth' --
COSTARD.
Me?
KING.
'that unlettered small-knowing soul' --
COSTARD.
Me?
KING.
'that shallow vassal' --
COSTARD.
Still me?

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83. Winslow describes Shakespeare's general treatment of low comedy: "without exception he used the comic types whose popularity was already established: fools natural and fools artificial, servants, rustics, artisans, and watchmen." Ola Elizabeth Winslow, *Low Comedy as a Structural Element in English Drama* (Chicago, 1926), p.109.

84. See M. C. Bradbrook's discussion of Jaquenetta's ties to other Elizabethan wench characters in *Shakespeare and Elizabethan Poetry* (London, 1951), pp.215, 227-228.

KING.
'which, as I remember, hight Costard' --
COSTARD.
O, me!
KING.
'sorted and consorted, contrary to thy established proclaimed edict and continent canon, wherewith? O with -- but with this I passion to say wherewith' --
COSTARD.
With a wench.
KING.
'with a child of our grandmother Eve, a female, or, for thy more sweet understanding, a woman.'
(I.1.241-255)

The clowns' contrasting styles motivate the humour of III.1 as well; there the word-play takes on a three-way constrast of styles as Moth's acute wit joins the fray with Costard's vulgarity and Don Armado's pomp.[85]

Costard is a "low" or "dull" clown; many of his speech-headings in Q and F call him simply "Clowne". It seems likely that the character was one of Will Kempe's creations; some readers see a residue of the clown's improvisations in the printed text.[86] O. J. Campbell links him with Pagliacco or Pedrolino, a slow-witted, rustic servant clown of the *commedia dell'arte*, which he describes as a highly-developed character type.[87] Costard appears in all but one of the play's scenes, and in some measure he links them together.[88] He is the play's postman, assigned to run errands for both Don Armado and Berowne. He is also expected to amuse the gentry: Longueville says that "Costard the swain ... shall be our sport" (I.1.178), and Armado describes him as "that base minnow of thy mirth". Costard's name hints at his particular brand of humour: a costard, being a kind of apple, was also a slang term for the head. The implication seems to be towards a natural wit with a bent towards the physical and the concrete. Costard would prefer to fast on a full stomach, and though he is one of the play's few "unlettered, small-knowing soul[s]" (I.1.244), he knows better than the lords that it "is the sinplicity of man to hearken

85. These exchanges recall the dialogues between quick-witted and stupid servants in classical comedies like *Miles Gloriosus* and neoclassical *commedia erudita*, as in Ariosto's *La Cassaria*. Regarding the place of such contrasts in the popular *commedia dell'arte*, Campbell writes, "By the time of Barbieri's *Il Supplica*, written in 1634, the dramatic contrast between the two servants had become a thoroughly established dramatic convention." O. J. Campbell, "*Love's Labour's Lost* Re-Studied", in *Studies in Shakespeare, Milton and Donne*, by Members of the English Department of the University of Michigan (New York, 1925), pp.1-45, p.34. Shakespeare uses the convention more explicitly in his depiction of Launce and Speed in *Two Gentlemen of Verona*.
86. Thomas Marc Parrott, *Shakespearean Comedy* (New York, 1949, reprinted 1962), p.123.
87. In the Italian form "he evokes laughter only by his ridiculous clothing and rustic behavior, and bears no relation whatever to the plot"; "in particular, he made himself ridiculous when encountering the principal zany and becoming involved in the toils of his wit." Campbell, "*Love's Labour's Lost* Re-Studied", p.34.
88. Thompson, p.1085.

after the flesh" (I.1.214). Shakespeare privileges his physical appreciation of language in two brief soliloquies. Costard's eminence in the play is also indicated by his wide association with the different configurations of the other characters. Carroll writes,

> Costard is a "reflexive" character and his main business, like Touchstone's in *As You Like It*, is to encounter other people and serve as a contrast. ... In structural terms, Costard balances scenes; one of Shakespeare's favorite methods is to juxtapose opposites, to bring them into dramatic conflict. Costard serves continually, in the midst of sophistication, to remind us of the foibles of the flesh and other inevitable facts about life.[89]

Shakespeare leaves the natural values of Costard's character static in opposition to the dynamic values of the lords. In Renaissance comedy clowns usually do not develop as characters; the traditional fool was a recognizable type that was expected to amuse. Costard does just that with his good-humoured, unflappable confidence and mother wit.

Don Armado's speeches are headed "Braggart" in much of Q and F, and there are signs that this traditional figure was the basis of Shakespeare's initial conception of the character. He makes the character Spanish and gives him an outrageous name ridiculing the disastrous Spanish Armada of 1588; both the name and the nationality were typical characteristics of the *Capitano* character of the Italian *commedia* of the later sixteenth century.[90] To an extent the other characters of *Love's Labour's Lost* see Don Armado in this role: Berowne thinks of him as "the braggart", Holofernes describes him as "thrasonical", and Costard declares that Don Armado's child "brags" in Jaquenetta's belly.[91] Yet Don Armado does relatively little boasting. He does parade his intimacy with the King in front of Holofernes and Sir Nathaniel, and he is happy to compare himself with Hercules, Samson, Solomon, King Cophetua, and the Nemean lion. Yet these are not the impossible lies of Pyrgopolinices, Thersites, Capitano Spavento, Roister Doister and Sir Tophas; and the characteristic interest of Don Armado's comparisons is not so much in his self-promotion but in his use of high words for low matter.

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89. Carroll, p.32.

90. See Daniel C. Boughner's detailed comparison of Don Armado with the *Capitano* as characterized in the collected plots of Flaminio Scala and the dialogues of Francesco Andreini in "Don Armado and the *Commedia dell'Arte*", *Studies in Philology* 37 (1940) 201-224. See also Marvin T. Herrick, *Italian Comedy in the Renaissance* (Urbana, 1960), p.223.

91. T. W. Baldwin place particular emphasis on Holofernes' link of the character to Terence's Thraso of *Eunuchus*; Baldwin regards the Terentian connection as fundamental to Shakespeare's characterization of Don Armado. See pages 547-554.

Nonetheless Don Armado falls clearly in the tradition of braggart characters, and the links to Lyly's boasting Sir Tophas of *Endimion* are obvious. Both Sir Tophas and Don Armado are accompanied by small, mocking pages; both characters conflate the military assertions of the *miles gloriosus* with the academic affectations of the pedant and the social pretensions of the would-be courtier; both betray their pretensions to the upper classes by falling in love with base wenches -- Sir Tophas with an old hag, and Don Armado with Jaquenetta;[92] both plays dramatize the characters' transformations from men of war to men of love in similar progressions from weapons to the instruments of poetry.[93]

SIR TOPHAS.
But take my pike and giue mee pen: *dicere quae puduit, scriberit iussit amor* ...
Now for my bowe and bolts, giue me inke and paper; for my Smiter a pen knife ...
(III.3.35-39)

DON ARMADO.
Adieu, valour; rust, rapier; be still, drum; for your manager is in love; yea, he loveth. Assist me, some extemporal god of rhyme, for I am sure I shall turn sonnet. Devise, wit; write, pen; for I am whole volumes in folio.
(I.2.172-176)

Shakespeare's dramatic use of his braggart character is much like Lyly's. Both the sub-plot "stories" of the braggarts go nowhere. Instead, both are placed in parodic relations with the main plot.

Moth, Armado's quick-witted page, also has a theatrical ancestry with Latin and Italian roots, but his most immediate predecessors appear in the plays of Edwardes and Lyly.[94] Like the boy characters in those plays Moth's character is a vehicle for witty repartee and song. He initiates no action and is primarily a foil to the pretensions of Don Armado, as Epiton was to Sir Tophas. Customarily he points out Don Armado's shortcomings as a courtier, either by proving himself a superior authority in courtly matters, as in the description of the "French brawl" and the ensuing love-making, or else by directing the audience's ridicule at the Spaniard through his asides.

DON ARMADO.
She deserves well.
MOTH (aside).
To be whipped -- and yet a better love than my master.
(I.2.113-114)

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92. Daniel C. Boughner discusses Don Armado's characterization as a contemporary social climber in "Don Armado as a Gallant", *Revue Anglo-Américaine* 13 (1935) 18-28.
93. See Hunter's comparison of the two characters on p.317.
94. O. J. Campbell discusses Moth's *commedia* heritage, p.33; Lennam mentions Moth's link to the academic moralities, p.58.

When Moth encounters the play's second pretentious target, the prolix Holofernes, the boy is equally adept at deflating his intellectual puffery with his "true wit". With his quick puns and word-play Moth makes Holofernes a sheep and a cuckold before the schoolmaster knows what is happening. ("What is the figure? What is the figure?" cries the pedant (V.1.58).) The boyish glee of trouncing the master --"Offered by a child to an old man" -- has clear echoes of the traditions of misrule. With Moth, then, Shakespeare stays very close to the standard character of the pert boy current in Elizabethan comedy. Indeed Moth is rather less individualized than some of his contemporaries; he consists solely of precocity and word-games. Even his name is made up of these two elements: his small size is reflected in the insect, "moth", and the particle, "mote"; and his verbal skill summons up the French "*mot*", or word.[95]

The name of Constable Dull needs no explanation. With the constable's first entrance the meaning of his character is self-evident:

> I myself reprehend his grace's own person, for I am his grace's farborough. But I would see his own person in flesh and blood. ... Señor Arm-- Arm-- commends you. There's villainy abroad. (I.1.182-186)

Not only do the malapropisms and mispronunciations establish the character's uneducated slow wit, but the insistence on seeing the King's "own person in flesh and blood" suggests the dogged seriousness with which the constable goes about his job. This characterization has a prototype in the *commedia dell'arte* figure of the stupid magistrate.[96] It also suggests the Watchmen of Lyly's *Endimion* and looks towards Dogberry and company in *Much Ado About Nothing* and Elbow in *Measure for Measure.*[97] The incompetent constable was apparently a familiar figure in Elizabethan society, for anecdotes demonstrating his foolishness abound in social treatises as well as in jest books.[98] The

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95. The primary meaning of the page's name is the subject of much critical debate. Hibbard, the play's most recent editor, stays with the Elizabethan spelling, Moth, and explains his reasons for doing so in Appendix D, pp.245-246. Kerrigan calls the boy Mote; see pages 160-161. Stanley Wells supports the latter choice: see *Re-Editing Shakespeare for the Modern Reader* (Oxford, 1984), pp.23-24. The association with the French name La Motte, which appears in historical accounts of Navarre, can also be invoked; see Richmond, p.214.

96. Campbell, pp.43-44, cites Dull's resemblance to Trappola in Bartoli's *La Regina d'Inghilterra* and Sberri in *The Two Italian Gentlemen.*

97. Even Custer Codrus, the simple-minded pig farmer of *Misogonus*, boasts that "I have been 'lected, for my 'scretion, five times constable" (III.1.19).

98. Hugh C. Evans collects some of these contemporary descriptions and concludes that "there is much historical evidence indicating that to a large extent Shakespeare was drawing on a character type from his own society and reflecting a situation which was a genuine problem for the Elizabethans. ... The escapades of these historical figures quite naturally brought about the development of a national comic type." Evans,

announcement of the character's joke of a name comes in Don Armado's letter and is immediately repeated by Dull himself: Shakespeare is clear in his emphasis, for Dull is distinctly dull-witted through the rest of the play. "Most dull, honest Dull," says Holofernes, hammering the point home. Dull's silence makes him a forgettable character for the reader, but on stage the Constable's presence is more telling. Although he speaks few lines himself, he remains on stage through over four hundred lines of dialogue and observes several interesting exchanges. His silence affords a visual commentary or counterpoint to the scenes, depending on their staging and performance. As in the characterization of Jaquenetta, Shakespeare here employs the theatrical shorthand of a traditional characterization. By summoning up a standard slow-witted constable in the first few lines, Shakespeare need do nothing more to establish the character's meaning; Dull can remain virtually silent for the remainder of the play, and traditions of performance and reception will guarantee that the dramatic value of the character will register visually.

By the end of the first act, then, Shakespeare seems to have enlisted a group of traditional characterizations for a predictable subplot: the Wench, the Clown, the Braggart, the Boy, and the Constable. The use of these generic names in many of the speech headings and stage directions in Q and F encourages the suspicion that the playwright thought of these characters as conventional types, like those of the *commedia dell'arte*.[99] The *commedia* characters, however, are usually held together by a simple intrigue plot, but this narrative premise falls out of the subplot of *Love's Labour's Lost*.

After the meeting of the lords and ladies and the establishment of romantic expectations in the main plot in Act II, the subplot resumes in Act III with a pun-filled scene in which the Boy instructs the Braggart in matters of love. This stylized episode resembles Epiton's advice to Sir Tophas and Matthew Merrygreeke's to Roister Doister. As the scene develops Don Armado frees Costard and employs him to deliver a love letter

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"Comic Constables -- Fictional and Historical", *Shakespeare Quarterly* 20 (1969) 427-433, 427, 433. See, for example, the tirade against incompetent constabulary in William Bullein's *A Dialogue Against the Fever Pestilence* (1564), edited by Mark W. Bullen and A. H. Bullen, Early English Text Society, Extra Series, 52 (London, 1888, reprinted 1931), p.93, lines 15-21.

99. The correspondence of these characters with the typical figures of the *commedia dell'arte* has been analysed by several critics, and certainly there are similarities. See, for example, Campbell, "*Love's Labour's Lost* Re-Studied"; David, p.xxxi; Phialas, p.74; J. Dover Wilson, *Shakespeare's Happy Comedies* (London, 1962), p.71; and F. P. Wilson, *Shakespearian and Other Studies*, edited by Helen Gardner (Oxford, 1969), p.68.

to Jaquenetta. This turn of events seems to promise a narrative climax for the subplot: the foolish Braggart is sending his rustic rival back into the arms of the Maid and is unwittingly foiling his own suit. Such a development would be typical enough; it would follow the general direction of *Miles Gloriosus*, in which the Braggart, Pyrgopolinices, is tricked into putting the girl into the care of her lover and his slave; or *The Taming of the Shrew*, in which the foolish Gremio sends his disguised rival Lucentio into intimate contact with Bianca as her schoolmaster. The particular circumstance of a lover bearing a rival's letter is likewise conventional; it recurs several times in Shakespeare's comedies, in *Two Gentlemen of Verona, As You Like It*, and *Twelfth Night*, and in each case the feelings of the unfortunate bearer are explored. But in *Love's Labour's Lost* neither the emotional potential nor the expected outcome of the situation materializes. In the first place, Costard misdelivers the letter, and in the second place his relationship with Jaquenetta seems not to enter into the emotional complications of "love". Costard certainly feels none of the emotional upset of Julia or Viola in enabling a rival relationship; nor does he follow Silvius' footsteps in pathetically dogged devotion. Costard is only too happy to accept Don Armado's errand and his "remuneration". And when he next appears with Jaquenetta in IV.2 and 3, the text offers no firm evidence that their relationship conflicts with Don Armado's suit. Jaquenetta asks Costard to accompany her at the end of IV.2, and Berowne calls the rustic couple "turtles" in IV.3, but in both scenes they seek to clarify the letter of "Dun Adramadio", not thwart it. The subplot story seems to have lost its way. Bonazza comments,

> At this point one might have legitimately expected a scene showing a climactic incident in the Armado-Jaquenetta-Costard love triangle ... but nothing further is heard of it until Act V.[100]

Act I suggests that the subplot will present the independent story of Costard, Jaquenetta, and Don Armado as a low comic counterpoint to the high comedy of the lords and ladies. But as Shakespeare develops the two plots their independence is blurred; the subplot ceases to pursue a story and becomes a straightforward parody of the characters of the courtly lovers. This parodic relationship is achieved largely through the characterization of Don Armado. Shakespeare makes his braggart another votary to the

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100. Blaze Odell Bonazza, *Shakespeare's Early Comedies* (The Hague, 1966), p.72.

King's academic discipline, and Armado's aspirations to a courtly style show him to be a clumsy imitator of the lords of Navarre, themselves not a little infected with the artificial power of language. The King and Berowne describe Don Armado first and foremost as a stylist:

> **KING.**
> A man in all the world's new fashion planted,
> That hath a mint of phrases in his brain,
> One who the music of his own vain tongue
> Doth ravish like enchanting harmony,
> A man of compliments, whom right and wrong
> Have chose as umpire of their mutiny.
> (I.1.163-168)
>
> **BEROWNE.**
> Armado is a most illustrious wight,
> A man of fire-new words, fashion's own knight.
> (I.1.176-177)

Later in the play other characters comment on Don Armado's verbal qualities:

> **HOLOFERNES.**
> He draweth out the thread of his verbosity finer than the staple of his argument.
> (V.1.16)
>
> **PRINCESS.**
> A speaks not like a man of God his making.
> (V.2.523)

Shakespeare actually presents the audience with Armado's prose style before allowing him to appear on the stage. The verbal excesses of his letter in I.1 take first place in establishing the meaning of the character for the audience:

> So it is, beseiged with sable-coloured melancholy, I did commend the black oppressing humour to the most wholesome physic of thy health-giving air; and, as I am a gentleman, betook myself to walk. The time when? About the sixth hour, when beasts most graze, birds best peck, and men sit down to that nourishment which is called supper.
> (I.1.227-233)

In the introduction of the subplot in I.1., then, Shakespeare establishes Don Armado's fantastic gongorism as a dramatic premise in its own right, alongside the character's inclusion in the narrative sequence.[101] As the play continues Shakespeare's interest in the stylistic premise appears to supersede the narrative construction of the subplot altogether. Hibbard writes,

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101. Richard Cody recognizes the resemblance of this verbal emphasis to the construction of Andreini's Capitano Spavento: "Don Armado belongs -- if at all -- to a special class of *capitano*, the Euphuistic, like Andreini's Spavento, who is hardly a braggart at all." Cody, *The Landscape of the Mind* (Oxford, 1969), p.119.

> Shakespeare, it seems clear, changed his mind about Armado. Having written that first letter, he knew that he wanted to compose more letters and speeches in the same exuberantly fantastic vein. He therefore jettisoned the notion of Armado as the braggart of the theatrical tradition, and turned him into a brilliant parody of the King and his followers. ... Armado's part, then, changes and grows as Shakespeare first perceives and then realizes and exploits the possibilities latent in it.[102]

The plot structure pursues particular parallels between Don Armado and Berowne. Don Armado's soliloquy at the end of I.2 precedes Berowne's at the end of III.1, setting up a humourous context for very similar sentiments.

> **DON ARMADO.**
> I do affect the very ground, which is base, where her shoe, which is baser, guided by her foot, which is basest, doth tread. I shall be forsworn, which is a great argument of falsehood, if I love. And how can that be true love which is falsely attempted? Love is a familiar; Love is a devil. There is no evil angel but Love.
> (I.2.159-164)

> **BEROWNE.**
> Nay, to be perjured, which is worst of all;
> And among three to love the worst of all,
> A whitely wanton with a velvet brow,
> ... Go to! It is a plague
> That Cupid will impose for my neglect
> Of his almighty dreadful little might.
> (III.1.187-196)

Both Berowne and Don Armado fire off love letters in the fashionable styles, the one a Petrarchan sonnet, and the other in Euphuistic prose, with poem attached.[103] Don Armado is certain he will "turn sonnet", and Berowne finds too that love teaches him "to rhyme and to be melancholy". Melancholy is also associated as a conventional sign of love with Don Armado, whose "spirit grows heavy in love". Both Berowne and Don Armado betray chauvinist assumptions of superiority over their beloveds: Don Armado's is hilariously obvious in his anti-Petrarchan comparisons of himself and Jaquenetta to King Cophetua and the beggar, and the Nemean lion and his prey.[104] "I am the King, for so stands the comparison; thou the beggar, for so witnesseth thy lowliness" (IV.1.77). Berowne voices his dissatisfaction with his "whitely wanton" who is "the worst of all" in the privacy of soliloquy, but the relation of power is inverted in his words to Rosaline, which put her in the standard Petrarchan position of superiority, compared with the gods:[105] "Thy eye Jove's lightning bears, thy voice his dreadful thunder ... Celestial as

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102. Hibbard, pp.29-31.
103. "The two men share the automatic equation of being in love with writing poetry." Erickson, p.71.
104. See Harry Levin, "Sitting in the Sky (*Love's Labor's Lost*, 4.3)", in *Shakespeare's "Rough Magic": Renaissance Essays in Honor of C. L. Barber*, edited by Peter Erickson and Coppélia Kahn (Newark, London, and Toronto, 1985), pp.113-30, 118; Goldstein, pp.346-347.
105. Erickson, pp.71-72.

thou art, O, pardon love this wrong" (IV.2.114-117). Berowne's verbal labours of love are conventionally styled, Don Armado's are extreme and parodic, but both characters demonstrate the play's complaint against Petrarchism -- that it is unreal, untrustworthy, and one-sided, existing only in the imagination. Goldstein declares that Armado "is a comic parallel to the rest of the satirical thrusts at love theory in the play, but more than that he functions as an intensifier, carrying to extremes the attack on the Renaissance love vision which is at the core of *Love's Labour's Lost.*"[106]

The comparison of Berowne and Don Armado continues as both lovers entrust their missives to Costard. He delivers Jaquenetta's tribute to Rosaline, and vice versa. The two successive scenes, IV.1 and 2, reveal the lovers' offerings being unsympathetically read aloud to critical audiences.[107] Armado's letter miscarries into the hands of the Princess and her ladies. Like Don Armado's first letter, it proves to be a preposterous pastiche of high-blown literary style (in fact a satire of the fashionable prose stylists of the 1580s).[108] As in I.1, the letter operates primarily as a reflection of Don Armado's character. Upon hearing the letter, the Princess exclaims,

> What plume of feathers is he that indited this letter?
> What vane? What weathercock? Did you ever hear better?
> (IV.1.93-94).

But while Don Armado's letter to Jaquenetta is ridiculous in and of itself, there is nothing particularly laughable about Berowne's sonnet to Rosaline. This sonnet was evidently a successful example of the form, for William Jaggard published it, along with the poems assigned to Dumaine and Longueville, in his 1599 collection, *The Passionate Pilgrim*. This conventional Elizabethan love-poem is funny only in that it comes from the pen of a man who boasted that he could keep an oath of celibacy and thought of himself as "love's whip,/ A very beadle to a humorous sigh".[109] But Jaquenetta, to whom

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106. Goldstein, pp.347-348.
107. See Anderson, p.57.
108. Carroll writes, "his prose recalls for us an older group of courtly writers: Harvey, Lyly, and especially, in the apostrophes, Sidney. Echoes of each of them are strewn throughout the play, but they are probably most concentrated in Armado's second letter. It is all familiar, or would have been to a sophisticated audience, from the casual 'Arcadianism' ... of 'which to annothanize the vulgar (O base and obscure vulgar!)' to the question-and-answer internal dialogue of Harvey, to the whole series of echoes of plays and novels by Lyly." Carroll, p.50.
109. G. K. Hunter considers the audience's responses to the courtiers' love poems in "Poem and Context in *Love's Labour's Lost*", in *Shakespeare's Styles: Essays in Honour of Kenneth Muir*, edited by Philip Edwards, Inga-Stina Ewbank, and G. K. Hunter (Cambridge, 1980), pp.25-38.

Berowne's poem must miscarry, will be insensible of this ironic reflection of Berowne's character. Only the King, Longueville, and Dumaine will appreciate the depth of Berowne's hypocrisy: this is the logic which leads to the reappearance of Berowne's sonnet in IV.3, exposing him before his fellows. Yet IV.3, by re-enclosing Berowne within his male quartet, abandons the structural relationship with Don Armado which motivated the exchange of love letters in the first place. This brings Shakespeare to the peculiar creation of IV.2 and its sudden introduction of two new characters, the schoolmaster, Holofernes, and the curate, Sir Nathaniel. For where IV.1 opposes the ridiculous love letter with a courtly audience, IV.2 contrasts a courtly love letter with a ridiculous audience.

For the comic exegesis of the sonnet Shakespeare summons up two more conventional character types from Italian and English comedy. Yet curiously these characters are introduced without the slightest narrative connection to the preceding action of their low comedy colleagues. Extraneous though they are to the action, Holofernes and Sir Nathaniel are involved thematically with the main plot. As pedant and sycophant they present an extreme example of academicism.[110] It is hard to imagine that Navarre and his bookmen would have ended up like these village intellectuals, but nonetheless the two characters hover around the edges of the play's theme of education, pointing out the follies of academic "facility" and the dangers of relying excessively on books. These characters seem to be by-products of Shakespeare's interest in the characterization of Don Armado, and they reflect some of the structural aspects of that characterization. As Don Armado parodies the courtiers in love, so Nathaniel and Holofernes parody the courtiers' academic ambitions. As the pretentious Don Armado is presented in opposition to the natural virility of Costard, so the pedants are contrasted with the ignorant Constable Dull. And just as Shakespeare creates the character of Don Armado through a heightened, idiosyncratic verbal style, he employs a similar style of textual characterization to establish the ludicrous meanings of these "book-men".[111] As in his depiction of the fantastic Spaniard, Shakespeare seems to revel in the outrageous turns of phrases of the pedants. Despite their satirical function as scourges for everything Shakespeare dislikes in teachers and scholars,

110. See Stanley Wells, "Shakespeare Without Sources", in *Shakespearian Comedy*, ed. Malcolm Bradbury and David Palmer, Stratford-upon-Avon Studies, 14 (London, 1972) pp.58-74, 60; Roesen, p.416; Levin, pp.115-116.
111. See Hibbard, pp.31-32.

he seems to enjoy their characterization hugely. These are wonderful depictions of personality; each line reveals more of the individual natures behind the stock types.

Presumably Sir Nathaniel wears a clerical costume, but in any case his first line locates him squarely within his profession: "Very reverend sport, truly, and done in the testimony of a good conscience" (IV.2.1). The Curate protects his own conscience with a close regard for authority ("an old father's mind", "saith the text", "as a certain father saith") and a scrupulous avoidance of the vulgar: he hopes Holofernes will "abrogate scurrility", and is relieved when his dinner table conversation has avoided the pitfalls of scurrility, impudency, opinion, and heresy. Although Berowne calls him a "hedge-priest", Sir Nathaniel admires learning. He exchanges a few phrases in Latin, though "a little scratched"; and he has picked up the pedant's trick of synonymy. As we watch him noting down one of Holofernes' more exotic epithets, we can see that Sir Nathaniel merely apes the pedantry he sees before him. His slavish flattery recalls the classical parasite character, but his devotion to a pedant is more typical of the *Affamato* character of the *commedia dell'arte.*[112] Above and beyond the character's sycophantic relation to the pedant, Sir Nathaniel has a religious characterization all his own, and it is often sweetly celebratory: "we thankful should be," he preaches; "Sir, I praise the Lord for you ... You are a good member of the commonwealth", "*Laus deo*". Alongside his prissy particularity Shakespeare finds room in the curate's characterization for an affection for his parishioners and the "commonwealth", "for society, saith the text, is the happiness of life" (IV.2.157).[113]

The characterization of Holofernes derives from a variety of sources. Not only does Shakespeare subvert the tyrannical name of the Biblical character, invoked in many artistic representations in the Renaissance,[114] but he ties it to the persona of a fussy, pretentious, Elizabethan schoolmaster. The Pedant was a popular Renaissance type, turning up as a comic butt in the *commedia erudita*, the *commedia dell'arte*, the "Christian

112. See Campbell, p.34; Carroll, p.37.

113. Don R. Swadley comments that although Shakespeare satirizes Sir Nathaniel's intellectual self-importance he leaves the Curate's religious function intact; Jaquenetta's respect "testifies to the esteem in which Sir Nathaniel is held among the more simple members of his flock". Swadley, "Three Jolly Parsons", *Allegorica* 1 (1976) 278-297, 281.

114. The story of Holofernes was enacted in at least two interludes in 1556 and 1564, and probably in others. See the third edition of Alfred Harbage's *Annals of English Drama 975-1700*, revised by S. Schoenbaum and Sylvia Stoler Wagonheim (London and New York, 1989), pp.36, 40.

Terence" school plays, prose narratives, English university comedy, courtly comedy, and eventually popular comedy.[115] The traditional characteristics of the Pedant were his devotion to Latin and classical texts, as manifested in his frequent quotations; his intellectual vanity; his loquacity; and his didactic manner, especially in the presence of children and students. Shakespeare keeps all of these attributes and specifies the character still more in what one critic calls "a highly elaborate, and a ruthless portrait".[116] As in the characterization of Sir Nathaniel, every word of Holofernes' part seems carefully chosen for the purpose of expressing a specific individual personality.[117]

Holofernes' first speeches in IV.2 set up the characteristic style of the role with the pedant's Latin references and various English definitions, his academic formations, and exhausting long-windedness.

> Yet a kind of insinuation, as it were, *in via*, in way of explication; *facere*, as it were, replication, or, rather, *ostentare*, to show, as it were, his inclination -- after his undressed, unpolished, uneducated, unpruned, untrained, or, rather, unlettered, or, ratherest, unconfirmed fashion -- to insert again my *haud credo* for a deer. (IV.2.13-19)

This sort of dry academic nonsense quickly makes Holofernes a ridiculous character, but it also makes him tedious. Shakespeare gives more scope for the charm of his pedant in endowing him with a vain imagination. Like so many of the men in the play, Holofernes wants to compose poetry. Holofernes' attempt, though, lacks the basic motivation of the other poets; he does not hope to express his feelings to a lady or to anyone. Holofernes just wants to show off: he "will something affect the letter, for it argues facility" (IV.2.54). The dry little poem is stuffed full of clever facility, in the forms of puns, alliteration, and rebuses, but it is patently devoid of meaning. One might say the same of the character itself. However, Holofernes preens himself with his artistic genius:

> This is a gift that I have; simple, simple; a foolish extravagant spirit, full of forms, figures, shapes, objects, ideas, apprehensions, motions, revolutions. These are begot in the ventricle of memory, nourished in the womb of *pia mater*, and

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115. See, for example, Aretino's *Il Marescalco*, Macropedius' *Rebelles*, Rabelais' *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, Sidney's *Lady of May*, *Pedantius*, Lyly's *Endimion*.

116. J. Dover Wilson, "The Schoolmaster in Shakespeare's Plays", *Essays by Divers Hands, being the Transactions of the Royal Society of Literature*, N.S. 9 (1930) 9-34, 33.

117. The theory that Shakespeare caricatured a contemporary individual in his schoolmaster has been widely attempted; John Florio, the Duke of Alençon, George Chapman, Thomas Hariot, Richard Lloyd, Thomas Hunt and Richard Mulcaster have all been suggested as potential targets, yet none can be proved. It seems likely that a performed allusion to a contemporary figure might have contributed to a courtly audience's pleasure in the character without entirely determining the character's meaning in the play.

> delivered upon the mellowing of occasion. But the gift is good in those in whom it is acute, and I am thankful for it.
> (IV.2.64-71)

The pretensions of Holofernes and Nathaniel are thrown into high relief by their association with Constable Dull in IV.2. The constable, already characterized as a dullard in the narrative exposition of the subplot in Act I, is here called into service as a thematic counterweight as Shakespeare dramatizes the contrast between two educational extremes, the esoteric and the illiterate. Sir Nathaniel's speech about the Constable shows the characters to be worlds apart:

> Sir, he hath never fed of the dainties that are bred in a book.
> He hath not eat paper, as it were, he hath not drunk ink.
> His intellect is not replenished. He is only an animal, only sensible in the duller parts.
> And such barren plants are set before us that we thankful should be --
> Which we of taste and feeling are -- for those parts that do fructify in us more than he.
> For as it would ill become me to be vain, indiscreet, or a fool,
> So were there a patch set on learning, to see him in a school. (IV.2.23-30)

IV.2 is primarily a verbal scene, in which the dramatic conflict is essentially semantic. Dull's dogged insistence on a few, simple words struggles against Holofernes' irrepressible urge to use as many words as possible. John Wilders discusses the opposition of Dull and Holofernes in this scene:

> At first sight the comedy seems to arise from the simple, ironical contrast between the futile, pedantic ingenuity of the scholars and Constable Dull's natural, pragmatic grasp of reality. The Constable's monosyllabic statements and his pregnant silences do, certainly, present an implicit judgement of the schoolmaster's "evaporations", but Holofernes is not shown to be merely ridiculous. ... The effect we derive from the episode is therefore not at all simple. We warm to Holofernes' energetic eulogy of his gift and to Nathaniel's adulations, but we do not entirely endorse them. We observe the little scene through the eyes of the enraptured schoolmaster but also, simultaneously, through those of the baffled, uncomprehending constable. The two characters hold conflicting, indeed irreconcilable attitudes ... Shakespeare touches lightly on the claims of the imaginative and the real and refrains from committing himself to either.[118]

The encounter does nothing to further a causal sequence of action, but it deepens the play's sceptical investigation of education, wisdom, and self-knowledge. Dull, Nathaniel and Holofernes provide satirical extremes of the argument, and we can see that the structural use of the characters goes far beyond a narrative format.

Given Holofernes' artistic "gift" he is a particularly funny critic of Berowne's sonnet, which he declares to be "very unlearned, neither savouring of poetry, wit, nor

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118. Wilders, pp.22-23.

invention" (IV.2.155). It is patently clear that Holofernes is anxious to prove that the conventional phrases of the sonnet ("only numbers ratified") are greatly inferior to his own "extemporal epitaph". Thus Shakespeare constructs an implicit comparison between Berowne (who has earlier characterized himself as "a domineering pedant") and Holofernes within IV.2. This analogy adds another level to the structural comparison of characters which dominates the plotting of Acts III and IV.

By Act IV it is clear that the independent narrative logic of the subplot has been replaced by a more complex, thematic scheme. For example, the entrance of Jaquenetta and Costard into IV.2 bears little relation to our initial narrative expectations for the subplot: they simply interrupt the thematically oriented dialogue between the pedants and the ignorant constable in order to reinforce the thematic comparison between the courtiers ("Navarre and his book-men") and the pedants ("you two are book-men").

The thematic organization of the characters in the second half of the subplot invites the audience to reappraise the characters of the first half. Although Costard and Don Armado were initially presented in a narrative relationship, this too can easily be interpreted thematically.[119] Bonazza, for example, views the two characterizations in terms of wit:

> Structurally a polarization is set up between the affected Spaniard and the unpretentious rustic. The former represents false wit and hypocrisy; the latter, natural wit and unabashed candor.[120]

Heninger, on the other hand, regards Don Armado and Costard as typifying two kinds of love: Don Armado as the affected melancholic and Costard as the direct sensualist. "True love is the reconciliation of these opposites," he writes.[121] Heninger conceives of the whole subplot as a thematic exercise, with the amorous opposition of Costard and Don Armado, encouraged by Moth, mirrored in the educational opposition of Dull and Holofernes, encouraged by Sir Nathaniel. Heninger explains,

> The subsidiary characters are arranged in two groups who serve to define the concepts of love and learning as they should be properly understood. ... The action of neither group can be called convincingly a subplot; Shakespeare merely brings one or the other on stage when he wishes to use the group as commentary to the

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119. See, for example, Catherine M. McLay, "The Dialogues of Spring and Winter: A Key to the Unity of *Love's Labour's Lost*", *Shakespeare Quarterly* 18 (1967) 119-127; and Terence Hawkes, "Shakespeare's Talking Animals", *Shakespeare Survey* 24 (1971) 47-54.

120. Bonazza, p.61.

121. Heninger, p.40.

> main action ... the patterns are made carefully analogous; only in this way, in fact, can the presence of Holofernes and Nathaniel in the play be explained, since they are in no way involved with the main plot.[122]

Heninger's thematic appraisal of the subplot points up the parallel functions of Don Armado and Holofernes. The characterization of Holofernes seems to be modelled on that of Don Armado, and the similarity between the two characters has been noted by several critics.[123] In the fifth act Shakespeare makes the latent comparison between the two men explicit, as Holofernes unconsciously condemns all his own faults in his description of Don Armado:

> His humour is lofty, his discourse peremptory, his tongue filed, his eye ambitious, his gait majestical, and his general behaviour vain, ridiculous, and thrasonical. He is too picked, too spruce, too affected, too odd, as it were, too peregrinate, as I may call it. ... He draweth out the thread of his verbosity finer than the staple of his argument. I abhor such fantastical phantasimes, such insociable and point-device companions ...
> (V.1.9-19)

In return Don Armado complains that "the schoolmaster is exceeding fantastical, too too vain, too too vain" (V.2.525). Shakespeare brings the two egotists together in V.1, where, "singuled from the barbarous", they strive to out-do each other in verbal circumlocutions:

> **ARMADO.**
> Sir, it is the King's most sweet pleasure and affection to congratulate the Princess at her pavilion in the posteriors of this day, which the rude multitude call the afternoon.
> **HOLOFERNES.**
> The posterior of the day, most generous sir, is liable, congruent, and measurable for the afternoon. The word is well culled, choice, sweet, and apt, I do assure you, sir, I do assure.
> (V.1.77-84)

This encounter could easily have taken the shape of another thematic dialectic, but instead it reverts suddenly to a causal line of action: the King has commissioned Don Armado for an entertainment to present to the Princess, and Don Armado solicits the aid of Holofernes and Sir Nathaniel, who in turn enlist the skills of Costard, Moth, and Dull to fill out the numbers of their pageant. The subplot lurches back into narrative mode as the final scene of the play approaches.

The King's request for the eccentrics to present some "delightful ostentation" to the Princess appears to be altogether arbitrary in narrative terms;[124] however, the device re-

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122. Heninger, pp.40-41.
123. Smidt calls the two roles "somewhat redundant", and it is true that both the Braggart and the Pedant take verbal affectation to outrageous extremes; p.206.
124. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream* Shakespeare motivates a similar pageant more successfully by making the performance a narrative objective in itself as the play develops.

establishes the play's initial relation between plot and subplot, high and low characters, which had disintegrated in Shakespeare's enthusiasm for the independent characterizations of his minor characters in Acts III and IV. The King's narrative impetus for Act V brings the secondary characters to heel by collecting the individual personalities into the manageable unity of a comic troupe of stock types -- "The pedant, the braggart, the hedge-priest, the fool, and the boy" (V.2.537) -- and assigning them a narrative duty. The collective endeavor of the show of the Nine Worthies does indeed offer a sense of comic community, as C. L. Barber says, but it also curbs the escalating independence of Shakespeare's character sketches.[125]

Likewise in V.2 Shakespeare picks up the individual narrative claims of Costard, Don Armado and Jaquenetta as introduced in the first act. With no textual motivation whatsoever Costard interrupts Don Armado's rendition of Hector with the news that Jaquenetta is pregnant: "She's quick; the child brags in her belly already. 'Tis yours" (V.2.666). With a jolt Costard returns us to the love triangle of Act I. At once Don Armado challenges Costard and the conflict between the two rivals finally comes to a head. Even here Costard's motivation is unclear (love? jealousy? avoiding responsibility for his own child?) but the situation of the braggart forced into circumstances in which he must fight is a clear throwback to the initial conception of Don Armado as a traditional boaster. The duel also recalls our initial expectations for a conventional subplot of comic intrigue. As convention would have it, the braggart finds an excuse not to fight. Don Armado calls off the duel over a technicality: "Gentlemen and soldiers, pardon me, I will not combat in my shirt ... The naked truth of it is I have no shirt" (V.2.693-699). This inglorious end to the braggart's warlike reputation is complemented by the circumstances of the heroic pageant. Ultimately the incident reduces Don Armado to the stock type Shakespeare began with. Rosalie Colie comments that this tension between expansion and reduction dogs all the minor characters:

> ... they are, whether they know it or not, fixed characters from an assigned decorum. Though we see them as far more than that -- as personalities straining the

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125. C. L. Barber comments that the pageant plans, in affirming a sense of community, are "winningly positive and hopeful", so that "characters who might be merely butts also win our sympathy by taking part, each after his fashion, in 'eruptions and sudden breaking out of mirth'." Barber, p.110.

> seams of their dramatic dress -- they never entirely abandon their predestined literary personalities.[126]

In V.2 Shakespeare struggles with his narrative need to suppress the secondary characters and his imaginative desire to expand them. For example, just when Holofernes' vanity has been hammered into the ground by the lords' attack on his "face", just when the pedant has received his deserved punishment, Shakespeare turns his sympathy and ours back into the character with a line of considerable dignity: "This is not generous, not gentle, not humble" (V.2.621). Similarly Don Armado argues for the "worth" of his abused hero, Hector, in a simple but poignant reflection on mortality: "The sweet war-man is dead and rotten. Sweet chucks, beat not the bones of the buried. When he breathed, he was a man" (V.2.652). Likewise Sir Nathaniel's unimpressive performance as Alexander the Great is redeemed by Costard's delicious tribute to his curate:

> There, an't shall please you, a foolish mild man, an honest man, look you, and soon dashed. He is a marvellous good neighbour, faith, and a very good bowler. But for Alisander, alas, you see how 'tis, a little o'erparted.
> (V.2.574-578)

Shakespeare cannot quite bring himself to leave these characters as complete victims to the play's comic scourging, deserved though it may be. The playwright's sympathy for his characters intervenes. So Holofernes is allowed a final word for himself to protest against the harsh outcome of the subplot. This sympathy for a character's point of view about the outcome of the plot anticipates Berowne's comment later in the play: "These ladies' courtesy/ Might well have made our sport a comedy" (V.2.857-858).[127]

The subplot, then, is a very strange amalgam. It seems to have started out as a true narrative sequence of Don Armado's illicit courtship of Jaquenetta, placed in relation to the forsworn academics' pursuit of the French ladies. Such a parodic interweaving of the parallel stories would resemble the plays of Lyly and Edwardes. But the fantastic personality of Don Armado seems to overtake the character's narrative function as an agent (the character is drawn more as a verbal stylist than as a lover), and the parodic relation between the Spaniard and the lords becomes a conceptual comparison of characteristic values. The subplot's shift from action to characterization would seem to permit the

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126. Colie, p.47.

127. It also anticipates the unsettling exits of Malvolio and Shylock from the comic plots of *Twelfth Night* and *The Merchant of Venice*; these characters, marked from the start of their respective plays as wrong-headed obstacles to festivity and love, are nevertheless allotted a modicum of individual response to the imposition of comic justice.

sudden, late introduction of two more outrageous personalities, Holofernes and Sir Nathaniel, whose relation to the main plot is entirely abstract. Although these pedants parody the lords' initial academic ambitions, there is no parallel action which links the two groups; instead Shakespeare's plotting in IV.2 and V.1 stresses the complementary relations between the various subplot characters (Holofernes and Dull, Moth and Costard, Holofernes and Don Armado). By the time Don Armado and Holofernes meet in V.1 personalities seem to have taken over the subplot; we are rapt in seeing how the two huge egos (and vocabularies) will clash.[128] It takes the structural imposition of the pageant to reunite the play's straggling plot lines into some sort of narrative integrity. It is, perhaps, a weakness in plotting to demand the "delightful ostentation" so externally and so late in the play; nonetheless it collects the secondary characters into a coherent group and reestablishes their narrative relation to the main plot.

Coming as it does hard on the heels of the lords' failed Muscovite masque, the show of the Nine Worthies draws a clear narrative parallel between the pretensions of the lords and the delusions of the eccentrics. Both groups aspire to an artistic grace and favour far beyond their capabilities.[129] As the ladies rejected the Russians with quick-witted banter, so the lords denounce the Worthies with interruptions and insults. Shakespeare makes this connection explicit; Berowne compares the two entertainments with his wry advice, "'tis some policy/ To have one show worse than the King's and his company," and Dumaine declares, "Though my mocks come home by me, I will now be merry". Shakespeare makes it clear that neither set of performers were as "worthy" as they had hoped. As John D. Hunt writes, "if Nathaniel is 'o'erparted' as Alexander the Great, what are we to make of Berowne's new role of sincere lover? Does it announce, like Holofernes' thespian ambitions, that *'Imitari* is nothing'?"[130]

In the final metatheatrical moments of the play all the characters begin to see that they have misplayed their parts. Armado has "seen the day of the wrong through the little

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128. See Winslow, p.122.
129. See the discussions of grace in John Dixon Hunt, "Grace, Art and the Neglect of Time in *Love's Labour's Lost*", in *Shakespearian Comedy*, ed. Malcolm Bradbury and David Palmer, Stratford-upon-Avon Studies, 14 (London, 1972) pp.75-96; Thomas M. Greene, "*Love's Labour's Lost*: The Grace of Society", *Shakespeare Quarterly* 22 (1971) 315-328.
130. Hunt, p.94.

hole of discretion, and I will right myself like a soldier" (V.2.712). The Princess apologizes for her ladies' teasing and begs,

> ... that you vouchsafe
> In your rich wisdom to excuse, or hide,
> The liberal opposition of our spirits.
> If over-boldly we have borne ourselves
> In the converse of breath, your gentleness
> Was guilty of it. (V.2.719-724)

Berowne in turn apologizes on the lords' behalf for

> ... what in us hath seemed ridiculous --
> As love is full of unbefitting strains,
> All wanton as a child, skipping and vain,
> Formed by the eye and therefore like the eye,
> Full of strange shapes, of habits, and of forms ...
> Which ... if, in your heavenly eyes,
> Have misbecomed our oaths and gravities,
> Those heavenly eyes, that look into these faults,
> Suggested us to make. (V.2.747-758)

The lords assume that this acknowledgement will be sufficient to restore the love-game to its usual course, but it is not to be:

> **KING.**
> Now, at the latest minute of the hour,
> Grant us your loves.
> **QUEEN.**
> A time, methinks, too short
> To make a world-without-end bargain in.
> ... Your oath I will not trust.
> (V.2.775-782)

It seems that the playwright and the ladies require major character modifications before the play can be allowed to reach its expected resolution of marriage. Katherine wants "A beard, fair health, and honesty," from her suitor (V.2.806); and Rosaline hopes to choke her lover's gibing spirit, so that "I shall find you empty of that fault,/ Right joyful of your reformation" (V.2.850-851). But for the present, the only available solace is the passage of time, the fairy-tale "twelvemonth and a day" (V.2.809).

The structural tension between the play's action and characterization finally reaches the point of stasis. Over the course of the play we have seen the characters developing from pawns in a pattern towards self-conscious personalities. Yet as they have become more specific representations of human beings they have become more inappropriate for perfunctory plotting. Shakespeare imposes the artificial order of the pageant to retrieve his exuberant eccentric characters, but he refuses to impose an artificial group wedding on his

lords and ladies. Somehow Shakespeare has decided that these characters will not do for a comic resolution, yet the reformation of the characters is "too long for a play". He dramatizes this irresolution in the decisions of the characters, but the conflict between the truthful representation of human concerns and the charm of comic artifice has pervaded the entire structure of the play.

Instead the play concludes on an impersonal note. Hiems and Ver, the owl and the cuckoo, demonstrate a much older, more medieval type of character-sign. Their meanings have nothing to do with personality; the figures on the stage symbolize abstract values. The final moments of the play obliterate the individual voices of the narrative. In the two songs we can see the basic, structural conflict over characterization in *Love's Labour's Lost* demonstrated in more abstract terms. The Spring song remains within the artificial mode of the pastoral, and its human figures are typical and unspecified, simply "shepherds" and "maidens" and of course the "married men". The second song of Winter is more specific in representing "Dick the shepherd" and "Tom" bearing logs; it introduces a more realistic picture of human life with "Marian" whose nose looks red and raw, and "greasy Joan" who keels the pot. Shakespeare leaves the dialogue open; he does not choose between the two forms. Yet overall, in the structural uses of characterization in this comedy it seems that he does choose; his interjection of realism into the comic formulae, patterns and types betrays a dissatisfaction with those limitations. In the comedies which follow *Love's Labour's Lost* Shakespeare will make room amidst the popular comic conventions for characterizations of emotional maturity as well as humour.

CHAPTER 8

DEVELOPMENTS OF THE TUDOR PERIOD

Love's Labour's Lost serves as a useful milestone for the development of English comedy. Not only does the play reflect the conventions of the tradition of English comedy as received by Shakespeare, but its satirical treatment of those conventions anticipates the self-conscious comedies of the early seventeenth century. *Love's Labour's Lost* is devised in the mode of courtly comedy, but the structural principles invoked by the play are true to Tudor comedy generally. The play's quadruple love story recalls the structural primacy of narrative as we have seen it in the Terentian tradition; in the first half of the play almost all the characters are bound to a story of illicit wooing, and the audience expects a comic conclusion of multiple weddings, as seen in *Endimion*, *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, and *Fedele and Fortunio*. But in the second half of the play Shakespeare develops several characters who are free of narrative obligations. He then gathers them into thematic groupings analogous to the concerns of the main plot, and allows his bound characters a chance to operate as independent figures and determine their own fates. These developments certainly recall the structural experiments in the characterization of comedy in the 1570s and 1580s. That the ladies choose not to adhere to comic convention is, Shakespeare implies, a risk of the play's elevation of character over action, as well as an internal criticism of comic limitations. Later comedies of the 1590s and early 1600s, including those of Shakespeare, reinstate the conventions of comic narrative, but they do so more self-consciously, with the possibilities and pitfalls of complex characters now available as a comic resource.

My discussion of *Love's Labour's Lost*, like those of the other five comedies examined in the previous chapters, has concentrated largely on the relationship between characterization and narrative. The bound/free distinction concentrates attention on the characters' relationship to the narrative action in a given play and suggests the relative importance of characterization in the overall comic structure. The comparison between static, consistent characters and dynamic, changing characters marks the complexity of the representation of human personality. From my chronological survey of the six comedies

we can see the introduction and increasing use of free characters and dynamic characters on the Tudor stage. Both of these innovations contribute to the prominence of characterization in the English form of Renaissance comedy.

In the earlier comedies of the Tudor period all characters were bound to the completion of the play's action. The narrative interludes from the early sixteenth century which preceded the rise of comedy tended to give action priority over characterization. For instance both *Fulgens and Lucres* (1497) and *Calisto and Melibea* (1520) restrict their characterization to narrative requirements. Heywood's *Johan Johan* employs bound characterization in its most compact form: only the essential figures of the husband, the wife and the lover appear, and their personalities and motivations are described strictly within the requirements of the farcical story. Just as in his debate plays Heywood contains his engaging characters within their dialectical positions, in his miniature comedy he restricts his characters to their narrative functions.

The rise of classical comedy in England re-enforced the use of bound characterization. Not only was the Latin comedy studied and performed in many schools and universities, but English translations and imitations flourished. A translated version of Terence's *Andria* was performed at Henry VIII's court in 1520; in this comedy, as in most of Plautus' and Terence's plays, all the characters are connected by a complex sequence of action, and each has some specific responsibility towards its completion. Nicholas Udall not only translated Terence comedy in his *Floures of Latine Spekyng* (1534), he imitated aspects of Terentian structure in his original comedy, *Roister Doister.* All the characters in *Roister Doister* are bound to part of the action, however slight. But, as I have shown, the causal structure of *Roister Doister* is tenuous and seems to be designed as a vehicle for the characters of the braggart and his mischievous flatterer. Udall's interest in character sketching is evident in these extravagant caricatures and also in the sympathetic individualization of the minor roles. Madge Mumblecrust, Annot Alyface and Tibet Talkapace are a far cry from the generic *ancillae* of Plautus and Terence. The characterizations of *Roister Doister* are bound to the narrative structure but they are elaborated beyond the necessary narrative requirements; Udall's experiments raise the importance of characterization within neoclassical comedy.

Intrigue comedy continued to flourish (with native embellishments) on the Tudor stage. *Gammer Gurton's Needle*, *Jack Juggler*, *The Bugbears*, *The Supposes*, and *Mother Bombie* all carry on the primary interest in complicated action; nearly all the characters of these plays are bound to the narrative, and their personalities are, for the most part, subsidiary to their narrative functions. But in *Misogonus* a number of the conventional characters of neoclassical comedy are divested of their customary narrative bonds. *Misogonus* presents situations and motifs from the classical drama -- the conflict between father and son, the trickster servant, the flattering servant, the *meretrix*, the *obstetrix*, and the discovery of the long-lost child -- but arranges them without the customary intrigue plot. The simple story of the prodigal son is simplified even more by the playwright, who omits his request for his portion, his departure, and his ruin, and instead attaches the story of the discovery and return of the prodigal's lost brother. However, alongside the bound characters of the simple story the playwright arranges a gallery of entertaining minor characters: the corrupt priest, the gambling servants, the squabbling rustics, and the mischievous fool. *Misogonus*' use of free characters develops the indication in *Roister Doister* that the representation of certain personalities could become an entertaining feature in its own right.

Free characterizations abound in the three later plays. Lyly and Greene put extraneous, sometimes silent characters on the stage for what is primarily a scenic effect. *Endimion*'s Panelion, Zontes, Pythagoras, and Gyptes, and *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*'s Richard, Joan, Thomas, Duke of Saxony, and other unnamed lords provide visual background and social contexts for their plays.

Lyly, Greene and Shakespeare all follow *Misogonus*' precedent of including free characters, usually clowns, who amuse irrespective of their narrative obligations. The resemblance between some of these characters reflects popular performance traditions. For example, Cacurgus, the professional fool of *Misogonus*, is much like Rafe, Prince Edward's fool in *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* and later Feste of *Twelfth Night*; each part includes disguise and deception, but none has much effect on the narrative outcome. The bumbling constable is another recurring free character. *Endimion*, *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* and *Love's Labour's Lost* each feature an inept constable with little narrative

significance but wonderful stage potential. Pedants are also popular: we have seen variations on the type in Sir Tophas of *Endimion*, the three Oxford doctors from *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, and Holofernes in *Love's Labour's Lost*. The Pedant's counterpart is the precocious boy, a type represented in the pages of *Endimion*, Will and Jack in Edwarde's *Damon and Pythias*, and Moth in *Love's Labour's Lost*. Although these characters are worked into various incidents they are free from narrative responsibilities, and their presence indicates an ongoing popular tradition. If some of the free characters of Lyly and Shakespeare *were* specific caricatures of contemporary figures, the burden of such characterization rested on the performers and the response from their audiences. For example, the possible line of descent from the satire of Gabriel Harvey in the Latin comedy *Pedantius* to Lyly's Sir Tophas to Shakespeare's Holofernes requires the continuing delight of audiences to fuel the repeated characterization. The inclusion of these recurring types assures us that characterization had become a major attraction of comedy and a major feature of its structure.

The free characters of *Misogonus* function largely as entertaining personalities, but the groups of wicked, good, and rustic characters establish a kind of moral dialectic behind the central conflict of the main, bound characters. Lyly, Greene and Shakespeare developed this thematic use of free characters into quite complex plotting. In *Endimion*, for example, Lyly presents the farcical braggart, Sir Tophas, as a laughable parallel to the hero: while Endimion pines for Cynthia, the queen of heaven, Sir Tophas longs for Dipsas, the old witch. The episodic structure of *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* compares the low-born heroine with a Spanish Princess; the Prince of Wales is mirrored in his fool; the jealous rivalry between prince and lord is echoed in that of two country squires and then in their sons, two Oxford students. The uncontrollable effects of the heroine's tempting beauty are compared with the spectacular but perilous effects of Friar Bacon's magic, and both the magician and the belle turn to Christian devotion to exorcise their vanity and ambition; both, then, are brought to celebrate the glories of England at the royal wedding. The analogical relationships of Greene's plot are so plentiful that we can scarcely tell which incidents are primary, which secondary. In any case Greene could not have achieved this multifaceted effect without employing free characters to fill out the patterns.

Love's Labour's Lost begins with a number of bound characters, a few of whom are grouped in a sub-plot which runs parallel to the main story. Initially Shakespeare fits the popular characterizations of the Braggart, the rustic Clown, and the Wench into a narrative line, supported by the free characters of the Constable and the Boy. As the play develops, however, these characters become increasingly free from any ties to the action. Supported by the addition of two more free characters, the Pedant and the Curate, they enter into analogical relationships with the main characters and with each other; these arrangements contribute little to the narrative, but they cast humorous light on the play's main themes of love and education. In the last act the free characters are bound into the rather flimsy action of presenting an entertainment to the main characters, yet their pageant has little narrative effect; rather it functions thematically as a hilarious reminder of the discrepancies between artifice and reality.

If we take these six plays as exemplary stages in the development of Tudor comedy, it seems that free characters were first introduced to provide entertaining character sketches, often of traditional types that had been bound in earlier dramas (as the variants on the morality Vice character). The inclusion of free characters allowed dramatists to experiment with various non-narrative arrangements of characters. The increasingly complex plots of *Endimion*, *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* and *Love's Labour's Lost* use free characters to emphasize themes and analogies. The release of characters from narrative constraint permitted the development of characterization in individual satires, vignettes, and cameo roles. Altogether the admission of free characters liberated the potential for characterization in comic structure.

The introduction of dynamic characters is another major innovation into comic structure, as the previous chapters have shown. Dynamic characterization features in only a small number of Tudor comedies, but its radical implications contradict the established Horatian critical tradition and burst the boundaries of the comic genre. The classical tradition assumed that characterizations were fixed within the stock types: certain qualities were associated with the different roles, and the figures of classical comedy remained true to their fixed characterizations as "running slaves, virtuous wives and dishonest courtesans,

greedy spongers and braggart soldiers", as Terence described them.[1] A few classical characters do change status during the comic action. Occasionally courtesans rise to the rank of free-born Attic citizens with the revelation of their previously concealed parentage, as in *Rudens* and *Andria*, but this is more a feature of the narrative resolution than a development of characterization. Other comedies end with the antagonist promising to change his behaviour, like Lysidamus in *Casina* and Pyrgopolynices in *Miles Gloriosus*. But these are exceptional cases; for the most part the characterizations of classical comedy -- love-sick, miserly, gluttonous, or sensible -- remain constant throughout the plays. Such static characterization persisted in Renaissance theory. Neoclassical comedy often imitated these types outright: *Roister Doister* presents the traditional characterizations for the braggart, servants and wife with only a few alterations. Like their Terentian predecessors, these characters remain true to their types throughout the whole of the play: Christian Custance remains virtuous, Merrygreek mischievous, Tristram Trusty reliable, and Roister Doister vainglorious through all five acts. Such static characterization is a feature of other neoclassical English comedies, among them *The Supposes, The Bugbears*, *Mother Bombie*, and *The Comedy of Errors*.

Static characterization occurs in native farce as well. In *Johan Johan* the henpecked husband is so much abused that he takes uncharacteristic action and fights his tormentors, but in a notable departure from the French original Heywood shows Johan Johan reverting to his initial weak characterization. In *Gammer Gurton's Needle* Mr S juxtaposes farcical rustic characters with a classically-proportioned intrigue plot, and true to both traditions the characterizations are static. So too are the rustic characters of *Misogonus*, *Damon and Pythias*, *Endimion*, *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, *George a Greene*, *The Old Wives Tale* and *Love's Labour's Lost*. The traditional English characters of the constable, the bucolic clown, the peasant farmer, the gossipping old woman and their cohorts are tied as firmly to their fixed characterizations as the traditional types of classical comedy were to theirs.

However *Misogonus* also introduces a dynamic characterization in the title role. The prodigal son brags, swears, drinks, whores and gambles his way through most of the

1. The Prologue to *Eunuchus*, in Terence's *Comedies*, translated by Betty Radice (Harmondsworth, 1976), pp.157-218.

play and then has a change of heart, repents, reforms, and begs his father's forgiveness in a new, chastened style of speech. This change in the prodigal's character forms the climax of the action, for, like the Latin educational dramas on which it is modelled, *Misogonus* aims to teach a moral lesson through its conclusion. It is never too late for the sinner to repent, change his ways, and be welcomed into the forgiveness of the true faith.

This moral significance of the prodigal's reformation descends from the biblical parable and its subsequent representations. The Renaissance creators of the Latin moral comedy, the "Christian Terence", relied heavily on the dramatic potential of individual change and development. Their plays insisted to their schoolboy audiences that they could and must change their ways and become serious students and dutiful sons in order to avoid the dire fates of beating, ruin, disgrace, and death. This dramatic exhortation was already present in the English theatre in the strong tradition of the morality plays. The morality play was concerned with the moral choices and actions of the individual and their effect on the fate of his soul. The scene of repentance and reformation was a necessary feature of the structure of most morality plays, for this choice assured the spectators of the "happy ending" of Christian salvation.

Given the strong traditions of the morality and the educational drama, it is not surprising that a comedy like *Misogonus* appropriated the central motif of the prodigal's moral reform. More striking is the assimilation of dynamic characterization into secular comedy. Individual development became a concern of even the most fanciful and frivolous court comedies. The theme of metamorphosis runs throughout Lyly's plays, and the flexibility of his characters is evident in their transformations into the opposite sex, birds, trees, and stones. On a more human level some of Lyly's comedies also describe the change of heart within a single character. *Campaspe* and *Sapho and Phao* each describe a monarch who overcomes his or her base passion to regain regal authority. *The Woman in the Moon* is perhaps the most emphatic study of dynamic characterization in the Tudor repertoire; it shows the heroine, Pandora, possessed by seven different personalities as the seven planets ascend to control her in turn.

However, the dynamism of Lyly's characters tends to forego the related quality of motivation. Most of the other Tudor comedies motivate the occurrences of the narrative in

the individual situations of the characters, rather than relying on magic, chance or coincidence. For instance, Johan Johan struggles with his suspicions and his cowardice for most of the play before deciding to revenge himself on Tyb and Syr Jhan. (By contrast Plautus relies on divine intervention and the fortuitous birth of twins to resolve the love triangle of *Amphitruo*.) *Misogonus* employs various conventional motifs from classical and romance traditions, but the play reduces the arbitrariness of these devices by motivating them in the characterizations. Misogonus is not simply a prodigal type; he is a prodigal *because* of his indulgent upbringing; and his father's indulgence is in turn motivated by his sorrow over his wife's death. Even the fortuitous discovery of the long-lost son is justified; no one has previously revealed the existence of the elder son because all the midwives were sworn to secrecy, but Codrus' straitened circumstances drive him to divulge the secret to Philogonus in the hope of reward. By comparison the emblematic metamorphoses of Lyly's plays seem imposed and artificial.

Lyly's contemporary Robert Greene integrated dynamic characterization with individual motivation in a new comic structure. In *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* all four of the principal bound characters make important decisions which change their role in the subsequent action and determine their essential value (their Aristotelian *ethos*) in the play. The decisions they make are conventional -- virtuous love over tainted friendship, royal magnanimity over tyranny, marriage over the nunnery, Christian devotion over black magic -- but the playwright puts unprecedented emphasis on the characters' ability to choose. In each of the crucial scenes (vi, viii, xiii, xiv) Greene dramatizes the individual dilemma in a monologue which captures the character's internal debate; and in each scene the suspense builds up to the moment of choice. The dynamism of four other characters is likewise crucial to the narrative: the sudden enmity and deaths of Lambert, Serlsby and their sons reaffirm the flexibility of Greene's characterizations. Greene's dramatic structure thus adopts a striking pattern of characterization: almost all the bound characters are dynamic and all the free characters are static. No earlier extant comedy makes the motivation and development of characters such a central premise of the plot structure.

By endowing the type characters of comedy with the semblance of choosing their own destinies Greene adds something of tragic stature to the possibilities of comic

characterization: the character may, as a result of his individual nature or situation, make a disastrous choice. The development of individual characterization in the tragedy of the 1580s may well have influenced Greene's comic innovations; certainly Marlowe's influence pervades Greene's tragic works. In any case dynamic characterization is a key element in the development of English tragicomedy. As in *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* it may allow death to enter the comic plot. In Greene's later comedies, *John of Bordeaux* and *James IV*, the rulers err in their judgement and the heroes and heroines are thrown into exile and suffering, yet all are restored in the comic conclusion.

In *Love's Labour's Lost*, however, individual choice overrules even the traditional comic conclusion. The more Shakespeare layers his Lylian courtiers and traditional clowns with independent motivations, self-determining choices and self-conscious behaviours, the more unsuitable they become for the formal intrigues and resolution of the plot. The characterizations upset the comic balance to such an extent that the play finally rejects narrative control and ends without completing its comic action. Sobered by the entrance of death into the comic world of Navarre, the Princess and her ladies choose against the conventional comic ending of a multiple wedding. Instead they withhold their consent for "a twelvemonth and a day". With this delayed ending Shakespeare suggests that his characters are more than the artificial figures of convention; he asks us to suppose that their individual lives extend beyond the limitations of the stage into other places and future times.

The comedies of Greene and Shakespeare both stretch the accepted narrative boundaries of the genre. In *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, *John of Bordeaux* and *James IV* Greene presents potentially tragic characters whose interaction resolves into comic conclusions of reconciliation and celebration; in *Love's Labour's Lost* Shakespeare begins with traditional comic characters who lead to an ending which, if not tragic, certainly withholds the comic benediction and ends with separation. This tragicomic tension within characterization and structure prefigures Shakespeare's problem plays and romances. In *Measure for Measure*, for example, the individual motivations of Isabel and Angelo are rendered so seriously that their conflict seems likely to end in tragedy; only the external machinations of the Duke force the narrative into the conventional comic ending of

multiple marriages. Likewise in *The Winter's Tale* Leontes is treated as an essentially tragic character in the first two acts: his obsessive jealousy brings on disaster and then despair. The comic action of the socially unequal lovers in the fourth and fifth acts counters the tragic situation and eventually restores Leontes to his family. These transformations from tragic despair to comic celebration spring from the concept of the dynamic character as it developed from the experiments of the Tudor dramatists.

The development of dynamic characterization and the use of free characters both tend toward the same result: both reveal the increasing independence of characters from narrative. Not only may characters appear without contributing to the completion of the story, but the depiction of their individual motivation and changing perspective may place them (like Berowne) in conflict with the action. In consequence the comic dramatists explore alternative forms of plot organization and arrange their characters according to allegorical, thematic, or analogical schemes. These developments take English comedy far from their classical models and distinguish it from other national forms of Renaissance comedy.

For example, a comparison of Tudor comedy with Italian *commedia* of the sixteenth century reveals significant structural differences around the use of characterization. The early sixteenth-century "learned" comedies of Ariosto, Bibbiena, Grasso and Machiavelli retain many of the stock characters of New Comedy: lovesick young men, clever servants, strict fathers, parasites and pimps. As well the learned comedy or *commedia erudita* established a number of Italian stock types of their own: the bawd, the spurious magician, the corrupt priest, the Latinate pedant and the boy. In these plays almost all characters are bound to the complicated Plautine intrigue. Bibbiena's *La Calandria* (1513) and Machiavelli's *La Mandragola* (c. 1514) preserve bound characterization while raising the interest of individual character sketches. Their satirical style of characterization became a popular feature of the *commedia erudita*; in Ariosto's later plays, *Il Negromante* (1520) and *La Lena* (1528), the corrupt characters expose the hypocrisy and decadence of contemporary society.[2]

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2. See Niccolò Machiavelli, *Teatro*, ed. Guido Davico Bonino (Torino, 1979); Ludovico Ariosto, *Le Commedie*, ed. Michele Catalano, 2 vols. (Bologna, 1940); Bruce Penman, ed., *Five Italian Renaissance Comedies* (Harmondsworth, 1978).

In the late 1520s and 1530s satirical comedy flourished in the plays of Aretino. Two of his plays, *La Cortigiana* and *Il Marescalco*, renounce the customary intrigue plot for the attractions of extended farce, embellished with numerous character sketches.[3] Such loose construction was atypical for the *commedia erudita*, however, and the learned plays of the second half of the century continued to rely on the intrigue plot of ancient comedy. In general the dramatists included a few entertaining free characters but kept most characters bound to a narrative function.

However, the *commedia dell'arte* troupes seized the free use of stock characters and made it one of the trademarks of their popular entertainment. Since Pantalone, Arlecchino, Graziano and their fellows were fixed, static type characters within the repertoire of a *commedia dell'arte* company, they could be introduced into the action with little narrative justification and still be readily accepted by a familiar audience. While the *scenari* of the Scala company include many regular narrative plots with respect for the dramatic unities, there are also frequent indications of free characters performing *lazzi* which had no effect on the developing story.[4]

To an extent the rise of amusing free characters in Italian comedy prefigures the same development in English comedy. (The Italian comedy was of course a primary source for English dramatists, and there were many translations and adaptations of Italian plays on the Elizabethan stage.) Both the Italian and the English dramatists introduced contemporary characters into neoclassical intrigue plots, and both sixteenth-century repertories include plays which shape the action around satirical characterizations. However, the English dramatists were exploring other structural uses of characterization as well. While the *commedia erudita* used free characterizations simply as diversions or embellishments to narrative, some English comedies of the 1580s and 1590s introduced free characters in their own plot lines or thematic patterns. *Love's Labour's Lost* uses many of the same stock characters as the *commedia*, yet the thematic relevance of their linguistic *lazzi* to Shakespeare's main story is quite unlike Italian plotting.

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3. Pietro Aretino, *Teatro*, ed. Giorgio Petrocchi (Verona, 1971).
4. See *Scenarios of the Commedia dell'Arte: Flaminio Scala's Il Teatro delle Favole*, trans. Henry F. Salerno (New York, 1967).

The differences in the English and Italian adaptations of the classical comic form recall the differences in their native dramatic traditions. The Italian religious drama of the fifteenth century had a strong narrative bent. When not dramatizing stories from scripture the *rappresentazioni sacre* described events from the lives of saints or dramatized legends or romantic tales. Most characters represented individual human figures, and all the characters were linked by the narrative sequence. In England, by contrast, the narrative logic of the mystery plays was matched and to some extent surpassed by the allegorical battles of the morality plays which gave a symbolic function to characterization. Morality characters might suggest recognizable human types but they also represented abstract values, and their configurations in the play demonstrated thematic concerns regardless of causal logic. This background helps to explain why English dramatists began to arrange free characters in thematic, non-narrative patterns in their comedies while their Italian counterparts kept almost all characters in a definite relation to the story.

The morality background also suggests why dynamic characterization became a feature of English comedy. The everlasting moral consequences of individual choice was a primary theme in the English morality, whereas the *rappresentazioni sacre* tended to celebrate steadfast faith in the face of terrible trials. The seeds of dynamic and static characterization are already present in these (admittedly gross) generalizations. Two prodigal son comedies from the 1560s-70s demonstrate the difference between English and Italian attitudes to comic character: *Misogonus* builds up to the change of heart and repentance of the prodigal for its dramatic climax, whereas in Cecchi's *Figliuol Prodigo* the prodigal has repented before the play begins, and the action involves the complications of his return to his family and friends. By increasing the importance and sophistication of free characters and introducing dynamic characterization the Tudor dramatists were clearly breaking away from the neoclassical structure maintained by their Italian counterparts.

Looking into the English comedies of the early seventeenth century we can see that the Tudor experiments in dramatic structure had lasting effects. The "comedy of humours", developed by Chapman and Jonson in the late 1590s, has characterization as its central premise. In Jonson's *Every Man out of his Humour* (1599), for instance, the narrative simply traces the chastening of eleven exaggerated personalities; the slight,

anecdotal action serves as a vehicle for the display of the individual "humours". The characterizations have the paramount position in the comic structure. The printed text even includes prose sketches of the characters: for example, Carlo Buffone is

> A public, scurrilous and profane jester; that (more swift than Circe) with absurd similes will transform any person into deformity. A good feast-hound or banquet-beagle, that will scent you out a supper some three mile off, and swear to his patrons (damn him) he came in oars, when he was but wafted over in a sculler.[5]

These satirical sketches are entertaining but unnecessary, since the characters are established just as emphatically during the play. Their presence in the text underlines Jonson's fixation with characterization in this play (and hints at the increasing popularity of the English prose "character" on the Theophrastan model, a form which would blossom in the first two decades of the new century in the works of Sir Thomas Overbury and others).[6] In his later comedies Jonson fastens his humours characters into tighter narrative plotting, as in *The Alchemist* and *Epicoene*, but individual characterization remains a primary comic interest.

The development of dynamic characterization continues in the romantic comedies and tragicomedies which follow Greene and Shakespeare. The Jacobean dramatists describe the emotional dilemmas and moral choices of their heroes and heroines with some regard for individual motivation. The moments of individual choice and change are climactic points in Dekker's and Massinger's *The Honest Whore*, for example. The plays of Beaumont and Fletcher are the best-known examples of the tragicomic form. Their sympathetic, emotional portraits of their main characters occupy central positions in the elaborate plots of *Philaster* and *The Island Princess*. In fact, the Tudor experiment in dynamic characterization becomes an established convention in Jacobean and Caroline romantic comedy and tragicomedy.

Although Lyly's use of allegory became obsolete in the more robust comedy of the men's companies, his sense of a character's potential to represent more than one meaning continued to appeal to comic dramatists. The conscious emphasis on the artifice of the comic character is particularly clear in the satirical strain of seventeenth-century comedy. As we have seen, Shakespeare satirized the hollowness of the Lylian pattern in the anti-

5. Ben Jonson, *Every Man out of his Humour*, in *The Complete Plays*, edited by G. A. Wilkes (Oxford, 1981), Vol.I, p.281, lines 22-26.
6. See Henry Morley's collection of *Character Writings of the Seventeenth Century* (London, 1891).

comic ending to *Love's Labour's Lost*; ten years later the satires of Marston and Beaumont mocked the stereotypes and conventional actions of comic tradition. *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* sends up the idea of the complex, dynamic character by showing the Knight to be an amalgamation of popular motifs cobbled together to win the approval of the Grocer and his Wife in the audience. And the biting satires of other dramatists, like *Satiro-Mastix* and *The Poetaster*, made specific characterization a barbed structural value in its own right.

These various uses of characterization in seventeenth-century comedy illustrate the flexibility of the character as an expressive device. For the dramatists of the English Renaissance a character in a comedy could function as a narrative agent or a moral or thematic symbol. As a representation of a human being a character could render a generalized type, a popular theatrical persona, a caricature of a real individual, an imaginary psychological portrait, or a satirical fantasy on a personality trait or humour. To a great extent this sense of protean potential comes from the experiments of the Tudor playwrights. On the one hand, they released the moral dialectic of the traditional mystery and morality plays into the human actions of everyday life, as represented by recognizable human characters; on the other hand the Tudor dramatists loosened the tight narrative constraints of the classical comedy and introduced more conceptual arrangements of characters and incidents to the comic plot. Coincident with these reciprocal modifications was the development of individual characterization; alongside the stylized idiosyncrasies in parts like Roister Doister and Don Armado are the sympathetic investigations into the characteristic moral and emotional responses of figures like Margaret of Fressingfield and the Princess of France. These characterizations mark a creative eagerness to represent individual, secular, human figures on the Tudor stage.

The characters of Elizabethan comedy are often praised for being "realistic" or "natural" or even "psychological", but these terms betray our modern preconceptions. With these terms critics commend the Tudor works for approaching the dramatic aesthetic of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The attempt to measure Tudor characters by modern standards is perilous, as it may ignore the larger, formal resonances of the characterizations in their own context. It is vital, then, to assess the characters of early

comedy within the terms of its own structure and its own theatrical tradition. This is the objective of the method presented here. By considering the relationship of the characters to the narrative in a single work we can see the functions which the characterization fulfils in the individual dramatic structure; by evaluating that relationship in terms of the relevant theatrical traditions we can start to see what is conventional, what experimental.

The Tudor comedy is a canon of experiments and compromises. From the imitation of the classical comic form and decorum the Tudor dramatists expanded comic structure into something much more flexible and comprehensive, drawing on their native dramatic heritage and culling from popular prose writing. In this way the use and depiction of characters grew from the simple, stereotyped agents of Roman comedy into figures representing moral and political concerns, figures representing familiar English types, figures of romance, figures who balanced other figures in a thematic system. Characterization became a primary part of comic structure, and experiments in characterization pushed the comic form beyond its classical boundaries and into the new composite shapes of tragicomedy and romance. The comic characterizations of Johan Johan, Christian Custance, Misogonus, Tellus, Friar Bacon and Berowne are interesting character sketches on their own, but they are more intriguing when viewed as components of experimental comic structure; and the close consideration of their dramatic functions sheds new light on the overall construction of the comedies.

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